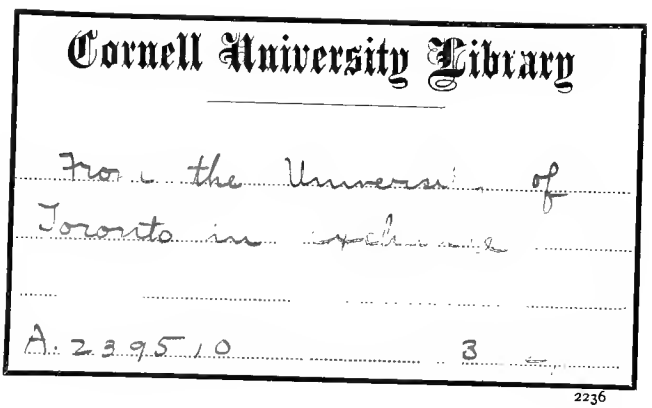
PR
2129
C61t

PR
2129
C61+


Cornell University Library
From the University of
Toronto in exchange
A. 239510
3
2236

1 HA1
1 F36

The date shows when this volume was taken.
To renew this book copy the call No. and give to the librarian.

Mr'10
OCT 29 1910
JUL 27 1925
MAR 16 1962 M P
APR 2 1962 A P
MAY 1 5 1962 G Z
APR 12 1963 A T
DEC 12
JUN 13 '66 H 2 2

HOME USE RULES.

All Books subject to Recall.

Books not used for instruction or researeh are returnable within 4 weeks.

Volumes of periodicals and of pamphlets are held in the library as much as possible. For special purposes they are given out for a limited time.

Borrowers should not use their library privileges for the benefit of other persons.

Books not needed during recess periods should be returned to the library, or arrangements made for their return during borrower's absence, if wanted.

Books needed by more than one person are held on the reserve list.

Books of special value and gift books, when the giver wishes it, are not allowed to circulate.

Readers are asked to report all cases of books marked or mutilated.

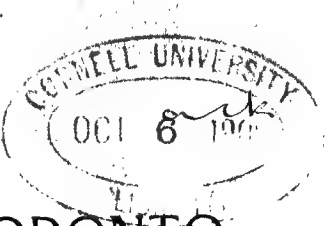
Do not deface books by marks and writing.

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.

http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924013116664

315 L
1, 42 G5



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO STUDIES

PHILOLOGICAL SERIES

THE GEST OF ROBIN HOOD, BY W. H. CLAWSON.

THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY: PUBLISHED BY
THE LIBRARIAN, 1909.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO STUDIES

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

Chairman: ROBERT ALEXANDER FALCONER, M.A., Litt.D., LL.D., D.D., President of the University.

PROFESSOR W. J. ALEXANDER, Ph.D.

PROFESSOR W. H. ELLIS, M.A., M.B.

PROFESSOR A. KIRSCHMANN, Ph.D.

PROFESSOR J. J. MACKENZIE, B.A.

PROFESSOR R. RAMSAY WRIGHT, M.A., B.Sc., LL.D.

PROFESSOR GEORGE M. WRONG, M.A.

General Editor · H. H. LANGTON, M.A., Librarian of the University.

University of Toronto Studies

Philological Series

THE GEST OF ROBIN HOOD

THE GEST OF ROBIN HOOD

BY

WILLIAM HALL CLAWSON, Ph.D.,

LECTURER IN ENGLISH, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, TORONTO

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

1909

H.

A.239510

PREFACE

THIS study of the *Gest of Robin Hood* is one division of an unpublished dissertation on the Robin Hood Ballads, presented by the writer in April, 1907, to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of Harvard University in fulfilment of one of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. In order that this part of the dissertation might be read as an independent study, its original form has been slightly expanded and revised; substantially, however, this analysis of the *Gest* remains as first written.

To Professor George Lyman Kittredge, whose lectures on the popular ballads inspired this study, and under whose direction it was completed, the writer is indebted not only for invaluable advice and criticism, but also for an appreciation of the nature of popular poetry and of the proper method of dealing with its problems. Professor W. A. Neilson has likewise read this study, and has made some very helpful suggestions. The author wishes also to express his gratitude to Mr. H. H. Langton, Librarian of the University of Toronto and general editor of the *University of Toronto Studies*, for his assistance in the preparation of this monograph for the press and his care in superintending its publication.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, TORONTO,
June, 1909.

W. H. C.

THE GEST OF ROBIN HOOD

INTRODUCTORY

Among those Robin Hood ballads which are derived from genuine popular tradition, the *Gest of Robin Hood* undoubtedly holds first place in interest and importance. It not only gives the fullest and most comprehensive account of the habits and character of that famous outlaw, but also relates a greater number of his adventures than any other ballad. It is one of the best examples in mediaeval literature of skilfully arranged and effectively phrased narrative. Finally, it is the only example in English, and perhaps in European literature,[1] of a poem which, while employing the material, the metre, and to some extent the style of the single ballad, shows in its length (456 ballad stanzas), in its combination of originally separate ballads of the hero, and in its obvious aim to give a complete picture of that hero's character and career, a decided approach to the method and style of the epic. The *Gest of Robin Hood* is, therefore, of great significance, not only as a masterly narrative of a popular mediaeval hero, but also as a contribution to the problem of epic origins and of the relations between ballad and epic.

In his *English and Scottish Popular Ballads,* in which the *Gest* has been printed from the earliest editions, Professor Child has collected in a long and elaborate introduction to that poem all available information as to the date of its publication and the probable period of its composition. There are seven early editions, three of them mere fragments:

a. *A Gest of Robyn Hode,* without printer's name, date or place, is the eleventh and last piece in a volume in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh,[2] which was discovered in Ayrshire in 1785 and presented to the Library three years later.[3] The printer and

[1] Two poems in some respects similar to the *Gest,* the English ballad of *Adam Bell* (Child, no. 116) and the Danish ballad of *Marsk Stig,* version A (Grundtvig III, 338), are briefly discussed below, p. 129, note.

[2] Child, III, 39.

[3] Dickson, *Introduction of the Art of Printing into Scotland* (Aberdeen, 1855), pp. 51 ff., 82 ff., 86, cited by Child.

date of this edition cannot be determined. There is evidence that it is not the work of Walter Chepman and Andrew Myllar, who introduced printing into Scotland in 1507,[1] and who printed in 1508 the first nine of the pieces in the volume. *A Gest of Robyn Hode* is in different and probably older type;[2] and its title, "Here begynneth a gest of Robyn Hode," would pretty certainly have read "Here begynnes a gest of Robyn Hude" had the printer been a Scotsman. It is doubtless the work of an English printer, which has been bound up with nine pieces of Chepman and Myllar and one piece of doubtful origin, by some collector or antiquary. "**a** appears by internal evidence to be an older text than **b**";[3] but **a** is defective, preserving only about 200 stanzas out of the 456 of **b**, **f**, and **g**.

b. *A Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode,* Wynken de Worde's undated edition, is in the Library of the University of Cambridge. The title-page reads: "Here begynneth a lytell geste of Robyn hode." At the head of the poem stand these words: "Here begynneth a lytell geste of Robyn hode and his meyne, And of the proude Sheryfe of Notyngham." The colophon runs as follows: "Explycit. kynge Edwarde and Robyn hode and Lytell Johan Enprented at London in fletestrete at the sygne of the

---

[1]In this year they obtained from James IV permission to set up and operate a printing press in Edinburgh. Dickson, *op. cit.*

[2]The type of the eleventh piece differs markedly from that of the others. It is heavier, squarer, and thicker, and some of the letters are of a different pattern. It is identical with a font occasionally used by Herman Bumgart, who printed at Cologne at the end of the fifteenth century. Dickson, *op. cit.*

[3]Child, III, 40. He points out in a note that in several passages, obsolete words of **a** are replaced in **b** by modern words, which in some cases make no sense, e.g.:

	a	**b**
9^4	allther moste (A.S. gen plur., ealra).	all other moste
61^4	muche in fere.	Much also.
138^3	frembde bested.	frend bested.
176^4	grene wode hore.	grene wode tre.
333^2	on rode.	on a tre.

There are two cases in which the variation of **b** spoils the metre or the sense and is evidently the result of a careless reading of **a**:

68^4	**a** By xxviii (eight and twenty) score.	**b** By eyghtene score.
343^2	**a** The sherif.	**b** The knyght.

sone By Wynken de Worde."[1] Professor Child says[2] that the date of **b** may be anywhere from 1492 (the year when Wynken de Worde succeeded Caxton[3]) to 1534, the year of Wynken's death.[4] The above colophon, however, enables us to restrict the date of its publication a little more closely. *A Lytell Geste of Robyn hode* was "enprented . . . in fletestrete at the sygne of the sone." Wynken de Worde did not move to these quarters in Fleet Street until the latter part of 1500.[5] The date of this edition may therefore be placed between 1500 and 1534. As Wynken de Worde printed over six hundred books within this period,[6] we cannot expect to come much closer to the date.

c, **d**, and **e** are Douce fragments in black letter in the Bodleian Library. They comprise only a few stanzas, and their date, place of publication, and printer are uncertain.

f. *A Mery Geste of Robyn Hoode, etc.*, London, Wyllyam Copland, n.d. (British Museum, C. 21 c.), is apparently a reprint of **b**. Some of the obsolete words in **b** are modernized in f. The date is probably not earlier than 1548.[7]

g. *A Mery Iest*[8] *of Robin Hood, etc.*, London, printed for Edward White, no date, (Bodleian Library, Z. 3, Art. Seld., and Mr. Henry Huth's library) is very similar to f.

It is evident that we have no proof of the publication of the *Gest* before 1500. **b**, Wynken de Worde's edition, was certainly not printed before that date. **a**, which is by internal evidence an older text, may have been printed before 1500, but of this there can be no certainty. But Professor Child makes it clear from the language of the poem that the *Gest* had its origin and was possibly completed at a far earlier period. The poem con-

---

[1]Child, III, 79, col. 1; 81, col. 1.

[2]Ibid. III, 40, col. 1.

[3]Ames, *Typographical Antiquities*, ed. Herbert, I, 108, note; 118.

[4]Ibid. I, 119-120. E. Gordon Duff, *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, LXII, 444.

[5]E. Gordon Duff, *loc. cit.* See also Ames, *op. cit.*, I, 118.

[6]Duff, *loc. cit.*

[7]Child, III, 40. 1548 is the date of Copland's earliest dated volume. H. R. Tedder, in *Dict. Nat. Biog.* XII, 174.

[8]In this and the preceding edition the gradual transfer of the word *Gest*, "a tale of exploits," to its modern spelling and meaning, *Jest*, "a humorous tale," is interestingly illustrated.

tains a large number of unmistakably Middle English grammatical forms. Final *-e* and *-es* as regular inflexional endings are of frequent occurrence, and all evident instances of these terminations are indicated by Professor Child in his reprint of the *Gest.*[1] The extent and importance of these Middle English forms he has shown by a partial list of them, grammatically classified.[2] With the aim of exhibiting still more emphatically the frequency of these Middle English endings in the *Gest,* I have attempted to make, in the subjoined foot-note, a complete list, properly classified, of all the instances of final, inflexional *-e* and *-es* that have been indicated in the text by Professor Child.[3] The

[1]He says in his textual notes to **b**, III, 81, col. 1, "It will be understood that not all probable cases of *ë* have been indicated."

[2]*Ballads,* III, 40, note.

[3]I. Nouns ending in *-e.*

lodgë-dore, 29[1], 225[1]; bowë-tree, 72[4]; bowë, 299[1]; shamë, 80[1]; nedë, 81[4], 265[8]; tymë, 96[3]; worldë, 111[2]; soulë, 128[1]; ellë, 132[1]; placë. 139[2]; leuë, 151[8], 444[3]; whilë, 163[2]; mylë, 168[2]; outlawë, 199[4]; othë, 203[3]; metë, 316[4]; bonë, 336[4]; myrë, 352[4]; colë, 421[1].

II. Nouns in genitive singular ending in *-es.*

knyghtës, 42[3], 94[3], 144[8], 318[8], 334[1], 356[4], 360[1], 360[3], 363[2]; deuyllës, 73[3]; sherifës, shryuës, etc., 153[1], 287[3], 300[3]; hattës, 220[2]; monkës, 247[3], 255[4], 368[4], 371[3]; lordës, 303[8], 386[3]; kyngës, 321[3], 366[3], 367[2], 376[1], 377[3], 433[1]; ledës-man, 369[1]; Goddës, 391[2]; Kyrkësly, 451[3].

III. Nouns in plural ending in *-es.*

ourës, hourës, 25[4], 143[4]; wordës, 31[2]; tydingës, 43[3], 178[3]; frendës, 59[1], 403[2]; footës, 73[2]; botës, 77[3], 373[1]; lordës, 102[1]; monethës, 152[2]; londës, landës, 108[8], 320[3], 356[4]; ioustës, 116[1]; stryngës, 131[2], 215[4]; arowës, 131[3], 140[3], 275[2], 299[2]; bowës, 140[3], 275[1], 289[4], 290[3], 342[1], 396[2]; markës, merkës, 146[4], 397[4]; felowës, 171[4]; trouthës, 173[2]; lokkës, 174[3]; tyndës, 186[1]; sydës, 196[4]; myrthës, 210[2]; hertës, 215[8]; hornës, 296[2]; woundës, 305[8]; wallës, 318[4]; haukës, 331[4]; mylës, 339[3]; knyghtës, 354[2], 368[1], 371[2], 434[8]; herdës, 358[2]; rentës, 378[1]; yerdës, 397[1], 418[4]; notës, 431[2], 445[3]; byrdës, 445[4].

IV. Adjectives not in the weak position ending in *-e.*

grenë-wode, 14[2], 25[1], 79[4], 170[2], 176[4], 195[2], 196[3], 197[4], 204[3], 237[4], 262[2], 265[3], 284[4], 295[4], 298[1], 301[2], 310[4], 312[4], 327[3], 328[4], 334[4], 335[2], 341[8], 352[8], 353[1], 373[3], 374[8], 377[2], 379[3], 414[3], 444[4], 445[1], 449[4], 450[1]; grenë cloth, 418[1]; a dernë strete, 21[2]; Grenëlef, 149[3], 150[1], 157[1], 183[3], 189[3]; a porë man, 210[4]; a porë yeman, 268[8]; a porë present, 275[4]; a trewë knyght, 320[4]; largë leve, 407[2].

V. Adjectives in weak position with ending *-e.*

our derë Lady, 9[3], 10[1], 65[3], 336[3]; the hyë sherif, 15[3], 318[4]; the hyë justyce, 94[1], 266[3]; the hyë way, 213[2]; the hyë selerer, 233[4]; her hyë selerer, 271[3]; my greatë folie, 51[3]; thye gretë kyndënesse, 312[3]; his gretë somers, 374[1]; the saltë see, 56[4]; this ylkë day, 87[3], 95[3]; that ylkë samë night, 173[4]; that ylkë lordës love, 303[8]; this ylkë tydynge, 394[3]; the proudë sheryf (sheref, shyref,

large number of these forms, the variety of grammatical relations which they represent, and the uniformity with which they occur throughout the poem[1] prove clearly that its history extends back

---

etc.), 146[3], 179[1], 182[1], 189[1], 196[1], 199[3], 282[3], 291[3], 300[3], 304[3], 313[3], 317[3], 319[1], 329[3], 344[3], 347[3]; the godë pens, 176[1]; the bestë frende, 201[3]; this longë day, 235[2]; thyn ownë tongue, 241[1]; her ownë speciall, 452[3]; our oldë manner, 257[3]; the whytë hande, 292[4], 401[4]; thy brownë swerde, 305[1]; the wydë contrë, 326[4]; his brightë bronde, 348[4]; the brodë targe, 385[1]; the fattë venyson, 393[2]; the donnë dere, 417[3]; 446[4]; theyr falsë playe, 455[4].

VI. Adjective not in weak position but with plural ending *-e*.
godë strokis, 165[2].

VII. Adjectives agreeing with nouns in vocative, ending in *-e*.
godë Scarlok, 4[1]; hendë knyght, 25[2]; thou falsë knyght, 113[3]; my derë mayster, 177[1], 183[1], 187[3]; our derë mayster, 449[3]; for sayntë charitee, 201[2], 378[4]; thou proudë sheryf, 297[1], 345[1], 346[3], 349[1]; godë Robyn, 336[1]; my leegë lord, 362[3].

VIII. Infinitives in *-e*.
walkë, 80[4]; servë, 109[2]; askë, 164[4]; techë, 199[3]; rewë, 222[2]; helpë, 238[3]; drynkë, 258[3]; standë, 290[3]; fyndë, 304[4].

IX. Present Indicatives in *-e*.
fyndë, 245[1]; askë, 164[4], 413[3].

X. Preterite Indicatives in *-e*.
(a) Strong Preterite, 2nd person singular: thou behotë me, 297[3].
(b) Weak Preterite, 3rd singular; madë, 47[2], 100[3].
(c) Preterite Plural, 3rd singular: stertë, 93[2], 396[1].

XI. Present Subjunctives in *-e*.
helpë, 154[1], 426[1]; drynkë, 142[4]; bryngë, 217[3]; savë, 264[1], 336[1]; lykë, 417[1]; motë, 452[4].

XII. Preterite Subjunctives in *-e*.
woldë, 62[2]; shuldë, 170[4]; comë, 428[3].

XIII. Past Participle in *-e*.
bodë, 222[4].

XIV. Imperative in *-e*.
askë, 258[3].

XV. Adverbs in *-e* or *-es*.
morë, 242[3]; thryës, 292[1]; sonë, 344[4].

XVI. Preposition in *-e*.
withoutë, 80[3].

[1]Fit I with 81 stanzas contains 27 cases of final *-e* or *es*.
" II " 62 " " 22 " " " " " "
" III " 61 " " 45 " " " " " "
" IV " 76 " " 32 " " " " " "
" V " 36 " " 31 " " " " " "
" VI " 37 " " 33 " " " " " "
" VII " 64 " " 41 " " " " " "
" VIII " 39 " " 21 " " " " " "

to a period when these forms were in general use among the people; to a period, that is, antedating the year 1400.

Professor Child characterizes the *Gest* as "a popular epic, composed from several ballads by a poet of a thoroughly congenial spirit."[1] Whether this poet made his compilation in the fifteenth century from ballads which had preserved some Middle English forms, after these forms had gone out of use, or whether he lived and composed the *Gest* before 1400, Professor Child does not think there is evidence enough to determine. The "thoroughly congenial spirit" in which the poet has handled the ballad material inclines one, however, to make him as nearly contemporary as possible with the ballads which he used, and therefore a man of the fourteenth century, when the Robin Hood ballads are first known to have been popular.[2] That the *Gest* was originally a Middle English document and has dropped many of its Middle English forms in its transmission by copyist and printer to the editions of 1500 seems a more likely theory than that it was composed in the fifteenth century from ballads which retained a few final -e's.

Whatever may be thought about the date of its composition, Professor Child's account of the constitution of the *Gest* has been universally accepted as the true one; and indeed it is hard to conceive that a poem relating a succession of distinct and slightly interwoven outlaw adventures in ballad metre and style can have

---

[1]Child, III, 49, col. 2.

[2]The earliest notice of Robin Hood yet discovered is the well known passage in the B-text of *Piers Plowman*, passus V, l. 399 f, where Sloth begins his confession to Repentance thus:

'What! awake, renke!' quod Repentaunce · 'and rape the to shrifte.'
'If I shulde deye bi this day · me liste nouȝte to loke;
I can nouȝte perfitly my *pater-noster* · as the prest it syngeth,
But I can rymes of Robyn Hood · and Randolf erle of Chestre,
Ac neither of oure lorde ne of owre lady · the leste that euere was made.'

Professor Skeat has shown that the B-text must have been written between June 8th, 1376, and June 21st, 1377 (Oxford ed. of Langland, II, xii). It is evident, therefore, that by 1377, ballads of Robin Hood were widely known in England. In picturing an idle priest who knew worldly better than sacred rhymes, Langland would never have given him an acquaintance with rhymes of Robin Hood if such rhymes had not been widespread and popular in his time.

been composed in any other way than by the combination and re-working of separate ballads of that outlaw. Professor Child has made no attempt to distinguish the outlines of these separate ballads, but has contented himself with the statement that "the story is a three-ply web of adventure,"[1] and with the indication of its three main divisions. Of other investigators, Richard Fricke, in a valuable monograph on the Robin Hood ballads,[2] has pointed out a number of indications of the simple ballads from which these divisions were made up. Professor Brandl[3] divides the *Gest* into "at least three different rhapsodies" which do not exactly correspond with all three of Professor Child's divisions.[4] He further makes the statement that the third rhapsody (fits III, VII, VIII) differs dialectically from the others in containing a good many Northern rhymes;[5] and from this basis he argues that the compiler of the *Gest* cannot himself have been a minstrel, otherwise he would have normalized the dialect with that of the other fits.[6] This conclusion, however, cannot be accepted; for although fits III, VII, and VIII contain several Northern rhymes,[7] the remainder of the poem is by no means lacking in

[1] *Eng. and Scot. Ballads,* III, 50, col. 1.

[2] Richard Fricke, *Die Robin-Hood-Balladen* (Braunschweig, 1883, and also Herrigs *Archiv,* vol. 69, pp. 241-344).

[3] Alois Brandl, *Englische Volkspoesie* in Paul's *Grundriss der Germanischen Philologie* (Strassburg, 1893), II. Band, 1. Abteilung, pp. 842-843.

[4] Child's divisions, I, II, IV; III, V, VI; VII, VIII.
Brandl's divisions, I, II, IV; V, VI; III, VII, VIII.

[5] Ganz für sich steht die dritte Rhapsodie in dialektischer Hinsicht: sie allein hat nördliche Reime und zwar nicht wenige.

[6] Der Redaktor war offenbar selber kein Sänger, sonst hätte er so leicht zu beseitigende Sprachunterscheide vor allem getilgt. Ihm kam es nur darauf an, zu der Ritter-und-Abtgeschichte in der ersten Rhapsodie eine solche Version von "Robin Hood und dem Friedensrichter" zu fügen, in welcher auch ein Ritter vorkommt, und dann eine solche von "Robin Hood und dem König," in welcher wieder ein Abt erscheint.

[7] Fit III, 148, name, *wane;* 149, dame, *home* (probably *hame*); 190, blame, *home* (*hame*).

Fit VII, 388, honde, *dyghtande* (See Emerson, *Middle English Reader,* p. xvii); 397, gange, *longe* (*lange*); 398, lyne, *tyne*; 400, bare, *sare*; 402, spare, *sore* (*sare*); 403, fare, *mare.*

Fit VIII, 435, twayne, *gone* (*gaen*).

them either.[1] Moreover, the occurrence of many of these forms in Midland texts of the fourteenth century or earlier[2] shows that a few Northern rhymes do not prove Northern origin. For these reasons, then, Professor Brandl's argument has no importance in the identification of the compiler or of his contributions to the *Gest of Robin Hood.* Later investigators, like Andreas Heusler,[3] Dr. Hart,[4] and Professor Gummere,[5] content themselves, in the main, with the study of the narrative art of the *Gest* as a development from that of the simple ballad. No detailed, complete, and systematic analysis of the *Gest,* for the purpose of determining, as far as possible, the outlines of its constituent ballads, the portions of the poem which are due to the compiler, the suggestions which may have come to him from sources other than ballads, and the manner in which he put the poem together, has yet been attempted. With the aim of supplying such an analysis I shall proceed to examine in detail each of the three main divisions noted by Professor Child.

---

[1]Fit I, 60, *rowe* (*rawe*), sawe.
Fit II, 125, care, *there* (*thar*).
Fit V, 284, *lowe* (*lawe*), shawe; 305, *hede* (probably *hefd,* cf. *English Metrical Homilies,* ed. Small, Edin., 1862, p. 39, and *Ferumbras,* 5301), lefte; 306, slawe, *rawe.*

[2]*wanes* occurs in *Seinte Marherete,* p. 21, E.E.TS. xiii, 1866.
"Whyle y was *at hame,*" *Lybeus Disconeus,* 52.
gange is in the *Bestiary,* l. 126, and *lange* occurs in Langland, *Piers Plowman,* B xiv., 161.
tyne is in *Genesis and Exodus,* 3518, and *sare* in the same text, 1166.
mare is in *Ormulum,* 19566, and Layamon's *Brut,* 30035.

[3]A. Heusler, *Lied und Epos* (Dortmund, 1905).

[4]W. M. Hart, *Ballad and Epic. A Study in the Development of the Narrative Art.* (Harvard *Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature,* Vol. XI, Boston, 1907. For the *Gest,* see pp. 88-109).

[5]Francis B. Gummere, *The Popular Ballad* (Boston, 1907).

I.

Division I relates "How Robin Hood relieved a knight, who had fallen into poverty, by lending him money on the security of Our Lady, the first fit, 1-81; how the knight recovered his lands, which had been pledged to St. Mary Abbey, and set forth to repay the loan, the second fit, 82-143; how Robin Hood, having taken twice the sum lent from a monk of this abbey, declared that Our Lady had discharged the debt, and would receive nothing more from the knight, the fourth fit, 205-280."[1]

The reader of this division of the *Gest* is at once struck by the skilful construction of the plot. The varied incidents of the narrative, such as the entertainment of a knight at dinner by an outlaw, the claiming by the knight of his land which is held by an abbot, the rescue of a yeoman at a wrestling match, and the robbery of a monk, are woven by their direct relation to the central motive, Robin Hood's loan to the knight, into a complicated, well-knit story.

This first impression of the artistic skill of the compiler of the *Gest* is strikingly confirmed by an examination of two important and related incidents—the capture and entertainment by Robin of the knight and of the monk. The significance of the correspondences of these two incidents can be brought out only by a transcription in parallel columns of those portions of them which exhibit either agreement or contrast.[2]

17. 'Take thy gode bowe in thy honde,' sayde Robyn;
'Late Much wende with the;
And so shal Willyam Scarlok,
And no man abyde with me.

208. 'Take thy bowe in thy hande,' sayde Robyn,
'Late Much wende with the,
And so shal Wyllyam Scarlok,
And no man abyde with me.

[1] Child, III, 50.

[2] Hart (*Ballad and Epic*, p. 93, note 2) proves the symmetry of the two narratives by a somewhat similar use of parallel columns.

18. 'And walke vp to the Saylis,
And so to Watlinge Strete,
And wayte after some vnkuth gest,
Vp chaunce ye may them mete.

19. 'Be he erle, or ani baron,
Abbot, or ani knyght,
Bringhe hym to lodge to me;
His dyner shall be dight.'

20. They wente vp to the Saylis,
These yeman all thre;
They loked est, they loked weest;
They myght no man see.

21. But as they loked in to Bernysdale,
Bi a dernē strete,
Then came a knyght ridinghe;
Full sone they gan hym mete.

22. All dreri was his semblaunce,
And lytell was his pryde;
His one fote in the styrop stode,
That other wauyd beside.

23. His hode hanged in his iyn two;
He rode in symple aray;
A soriar man than he was one
Rode neuer in somer day.

24. Litell Johnn was full curteyes,
And sette hym on his kne:
'Welcom be ye, gentyll knyght,
Welcom ar ye to me.

209. 'And walke vp vnder the Sayles,
And to Watlynge-strete,
And wayte after some vnketh gest;
Vp-chaunce ye may them mete.

210. 'Whether he be messengere,
Or a man that myrthës can,
Of my good he shall haue some,
Yf he be a porē man.'

212. They went vp to the Sayles,
These yemen all thre;
They loked est, they loked west,
They myght no man se.

213. But as they loked in Bernysdale,
By the hyē waye,
Than were they ware of two blacke monkes,
Eche on a good palferay.

216. 'The monke hath two and fifty men,
And seuen somers full stronge;
There rydeth no bysshop in this londe
So ryally, I vnderstond.

219. 'Abyde, chorle monke,' sayde Lytell Johan,
'No ferther that thou gone;
Yf thou doost, by dere worthy God,
Thy deth is in my honde.

25. 'Welcom be thou to grenë wode,
Hendë knyght and fre;
My maister hath abiden you fastinge,
Syr, al these ourës thre.'

26. 'Who is thy maister?' sayde the knyght;
Johnn sayde, Robyn Hode;
'He is a gode yoman,' sayde the knyght,
'Of hym I haue herde moche gode.

27. 'I graunte,' he sayde, 'with you to wende,
My bretherne, all in fere;
My purpos was to haue dyned to-day
At Blith or Doncastere."[1]

29. They brought hym to the lodgë-dore;
Whan Robyn hym gan see,
Full curtesly dyd of his hode
And sette hym on his knee.

30. 'Welcome, sir knight,' than sayde Robyn,
'Welcome art thou to me;
I haue abyden you fastinge, sir,
All these ouris thre.'

220. 'And euyll thryfte on thy hede,' sayd Lytell Johan,
Ryght vnder thy hattës bonde;
For thou hast made our mayster wroth,
He is fastynge so longe.'

221. 'Who is your mayster?' sayd the monke,
Lytell Johan sayd, Robyn Hode;
'He is a stronge thefe,' sayd the monke,
Of hym herd I neuer good.'

225. They brought the monke to the lodgë-dore,
Whether he were loth or lefe,
For to speke with Robyn Hode
Maugre in theyr tethe.

226. Robin dyde adowne his hode,
The monke whan that he se;

---

[1]In Fit IV, st. 258, the monk, when about to depart, is bidden by Robin to ask to drink. He replies in st. 259.

'Nay for God,' than sayd the monke,
'Me reweth I cam so nere;
For better chepe I myght haue dyned
In Blythe or in Dankestere.'

Though an obvious parallel to st. 27, this occurs in a different situation and not in the corresponding point in the narrative of Fit IV.

31. Than answered the gentyll knight;
With wordēs fayre and fre;
God the saue, goode Robyn,
And all thy fayre meynē.

32. They wasshed togeder and wyped bothe,
And set to theyr dynere;
Brede and wyne they had right ynoughe,
And noumbles of the dere.

34. 'Do gladly, sir knight,' sayde Robyn;
'Gramarcy, sir,' sayde he;
. . . . . .

37. 'But pay or ye wende,' sayde Robyn;
'Me thynketh it is gode ryght;
It was neuer the maner, by dere worthi God,
A yoman to pay for a knyhht.

38. 'I haue nought in my coffers,' saide the knyghte,
That I may profer for shame:'
'Litell Johnn, go loke,' sayde Robyn,
Ne let nat for no blame.

39. 'Tel me truth,' than saide Robyn,
'So God haue parte of the:'
'I haue no more but ten shelynges,' sayde the knyght,
'So God haue parte of me.'

40. 'If thou hast no more,' sayd Robyn,
'I woll nat one peny;
And yf thou haue nede of any more
More shall I lend the.

The monk was not so curtëyse
His hode then let he be.

231. They made the monke to wasshe and wype,
And syt at his denere,
Robyn Hode and Lytell Johan
They serued him both infere.

232. 'Do gladly, monke,' sayd Robyn.
'Gramercy, syr,' sayd he.

243. 'What is in your cofers?' sayd Robyn,
'Trewe than tell thou me:'
'Syr,' he sayd, 'twenty marke,
Al so mote I the.'

244. 'Yf there be no more,' sayd Robyn,
'I wyll not one peny;
Yf thou hast myster of ony more,
Syr, more I shall lende to the.

41. 'Go nowe furth, Litell Johnn,
The truth tell thou me;
If there be no more but ten shelinges,
No peny that I se.'

246. 'Go nowe forthe, Lytell Johan,
And the trouth tell thou me;
If there be no more but twenty marke
No peny that I se.'

42. Lytell Johnn sprede downe hys mantell
Full fayre vpon the grounde,
And there he fonde in the knyghtës cofer
But euen halfe a pounde.

247. Lytell Johan spred his mantell downe,
As he had done before,
And he tolde out of the monkës male
Eyght hondred pounde and more.

43. Littell Johnn let it lye full styll,
And went to his maysteer full lowe;
'What tidyngës Johnn?' sayde Robyn;
'Sir, the knyght is true inowe.'[1]

248. Lytell Johan let it lye full styll,
And went to his mayster in hast;

44. 'Fyll of the best wine,' sayde Robyn,
The knyght shall begynne.

251. 'Fyll of the best wyne, and do hym drynke,' said Robyn,

A single reading of these two incidents arranged as above brings out clearly their conscious parallelism and the contrast, extending to the smallest details, which is deliberately drawn between the reception and conduct of the knight and of the monk. The parallels are too evident from the above transcription to require further citation. The contrasts have been sufficiently indicated by Fricke[2] and by Hart.[3] Among them may be mentioned Robin's expectation as to the rank of his guest, and the outcome (st. 19 ff, 210 ff); the equipment and bearing of knight and monk (st. 22-23, 216); Little John's treatment of each (st. 24-25, 219-220); the knight's courtesy and the monk's churlishness (st. 29-31, 226); the knight's truth and the monk's

[1] In st. 248[3] Little John says, 'Syr, the monke is trewe ynowe.' But the reference is to his coming as a representative of Our Lady, not to his truthfulness in word. The parallel is, therefore, not complete.

[2] *Die Robin-Hood-Balladen*, p. 12 f.

[3] *Ballad and Epic*, p. 94 ff.

falsehood (st. 39-43, 243-248). If there were any doubt that these contrasts were made consciously and deliberately, it would be removed by the fact (pointed out by Hart[1]) that st. 247^{1-2}, "Lytell Johan spred his mantell downe, *As he had done before,*" refers definitely to the contrasted incident in st. 42^{1-2}.

"Ritter und Mönch," says Fricke, "bilden einen interessanten, kunstvoll durchgearbeiteten Gegensatz und zeigen aufs deutlichste, in wie engem Zusammenhang die beiderseitigen Erzählungen in ihrer jetzigen Gestalt erfunden sind."[2] The conscious artistry of these two contrasted incidents could hardly be better described.

Besides proving the artistic skill with which division I is composed, the parallel arrangement of the different episodes of the knight and the monk furnishes an excellent point of departure for an attempt to determine the constituent ballads of this part of the *Gest*.

Read separately, each of the parallel columns printed on pages 9 to 13 is seen to require very few additional lines to make it a complete ballad. Stanza 34, in the first column, and stanza 232, in the second, would each have to be completed by two more lines. Stanza 248 of the second column also needs two lines. Stanzas 44 and 251 require filling out, and another stanza would perhaps be necessary in order properly to conclude the narrative of each column. With these slight changes we should have two complete and independent ballads, the first of a knight, entertained by Robin Hood and dismissed unrobbed for his truthfulness, the second of a monk, entertained by Robin Hood and robbed for lying about his money. In other words, those portions of fits I and IV which are either parallel or in direct contrast, relate, when read separately, two adventures complete in themselves and independent of the remainder of the *Gest*, each of which might, with unimportant additions, stand by itself as a ballad.

It is a natural assumption that the two ballads which may thus be detached almost complete from fits I and IV represent

---

[1] *Ballad and Epic* p. 96.

[2] *Die Robin-Hood-Balladen*, p. 12.

two actual ballads, upon which fits I and IV were based. But there is an alternative assumption, that only one of the two adventures is derived from a ballad and that the other is an imitation of it, invented as a companion passage by the compiler of the *Gest*.[1] The latter theory is supported by the many conscious and artistic parallels, just indicated, between the two passages; and its plausibility can be counteracted only by proof of the existence, among the traditions of some outlaw hero, of two separate adventures, closely similar to Robin's dealings, in fits I and IV respectively, with a knight and a monk.

Among the extant ballads of Robin Hood, two separate ballads, closely resembling the respective passages in the *Gest*, one relating Robin's treatment of a truthful knight, the other his treatment of a lying monk, are not to be found. But in the thirteenth century French romance of Eustace the Monk,[2] a historical outlaw whose fame in popular tale and song has thus been preserved, and whose affinities with Robin Hood have been pointed out by Thomas Wright and by Professor Child,[3] there occur independently, without similarity or parallelism of language and order of events, and in widely separated and unconnected parts of the poem, two narratives closely agreeing in sub-

---

[1]This is the assumption adopted by Fricke, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

[2]*Roman d'Eustache le Moine, pirate fameux du XIII^e siècle, publié pour la première fois d'après un manuscrit de la Bibliothèque Royale par Francisque Michel.* London, 1834.

Wistasse le Moine, altfranzösischer Abenteuerroman des XIII. Jahrhunderts . . . von neuem herausgegeben von Wendelin Foerster und Johann Trost. (Foerster's *Romanische Bibliothek*, IV.) Halle, 1891.

[3]Thomas Wright, *Eustace the Monk*, in *Essays on the Literature, Popular Superstitions, and History of England in the Middle Ages* (London, 1846), Vol. II, pp. 121-146. Child: *Eng. and Scot. Ballads*, III, 53, col. 1, 109, col. 2. Eustace, like Robin Hood, is outlawed for violently resisting an act of injustice. (See *Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham*, no. 139). Like Robin Hood he takes refuge in the woods. He is active, vigilant, resourceful, and surrounded by a band of followers who are prompt to execute his plans (*Roman d'Eustache*, ll. 835, 1731 ff, etc.). Like Robin Hood he frequently evades and outwits his enemies by the use of disguise. Like Robin Hood he is captured, rescued by his followers (*Roman d'Eustache*, 1737 ff), visits royalty, and dies bravely. Four of his exploits closely resemble four exploits of Robin Hood : his adoption of the disguise of a potter (*Roman*, ll. 1072 ff, *R.H. and the Potter*, no. 121); his release of the count, his enemy, after he has decoyed him into his power in the woods (*Roman*, ll. 775 ff, *Gest*, fit III); and the two parallel incidents about to be discussed.

stance with the two passages just discussed in the *Gest*.[1] In the first narrative, Eustace meets a merchant of Boulogne and says, "Tell me how much money you have." The merchant replies, "I will not lie, I have sixty pounds in my belt, and fifteen sous in my purse." Eustace takes him into a thicket, searches him, and finding that he has told the truth, returns all the money and lets him go, telling him that if he had lied he would have lost every penny. In the second narrative, Eustace meets the abbot of Jumiaus. "Dan abbot," says Eustace, "stand! How much money have you? Do not conceal it." "What is that to you?" asks the monk. "What is that to me?" says Eustace, about to strike him, "I intend to have some of it. Dismount at once, or you shall be well beaten." After some further parley the monk dismounts, and Eustace again asks him how much money he has. He replies, "Four marks, truly; I have four marks of silver." Eustace searches him and finds thirty marks or more. He returns four marks to the abbot and keeps the remainder. "If the abbot had told the truth he would have got all his money back. He lost his money only because he lied." These two stories occur, as it has already been pointed out, in widely separated parts of the poem. Although they relate two complementary instances of one outlaw's method of robbery, they are absolutely unconnected either by the intervening narrative or by their phrasing and structure. There is every indication that they are derived from two separate traditional tales or ballads, one of Eustace and a truthful merchant, the other of Eustace and a lying monk, both going back, undoubtedly, to a common conception of the outlaw's habits, but not necessarily composed or remembered together, and certainly not connected or thrown into symmetrical contrast by the author of the *Roman d'Eustache*. Now the existence in the Eustace tradition of two such independent stories makes it the most plausible assumption that the two parallel and symmetrically contrasted passages in fits I and IV of the *Gest* are derived from two independent ballads of Robin Hood, resembling in main outlines the two independent stories of Eustace the Monk.

[1] *Roman d'Eustache*, ll. 928-951, 1744-1775.

Stanzas 17-44, therefore, probably represent the substance of a short ballad in which a knight was brought to Robin Hood, entertained by him, and then asked how much money he had; he named a small amount, and Robin, after having him searched, found that he spoke the truth. Owing, however, to Robin Hood's reputation for generosity to the poor,[1] it is probable that this ballad did not end, as in the Eustace-merchant story, with the mere dismissal of the knight unrobbed. Nor is it probable that it ended, as in the *Gest,* with the loaning to the knight by Robin of four hundred pounds on the security of Our Lady (sts. 44^3-81); for this is a more complicated narrative incident than anything in the Eustace-merchant story and implies a new adventure involving the payment of the loan. In the original ballad Robin, it is most likely, not only restored to the knight his few coins, but presented him outright with a large sum of money.[2]

The stanzas of fit IV which correspond to st. $17\text{-}44^2$ of fit I and are transcribed above in a column parallel with them (viz., stanzas 208-210, 212, 213, 216, 219-221, 225, 226, 231, $232^{1\text{-}2}$, 243, 244, $246\text{-}248^2$, 251^1) relate with few breaks, when read consecutively, how Little John and his two comrades brought a monk, willy-nilly, before Robin Hood, how he lied to Robin about the amount of his money, and how Robin took from him the sum of eight hundred pounds. These stanzas, therefore, which contain no reference to the acceptance of the security of the Virgin for the knight's loan, form a narrative closely parallel to the story of Eustace and the abbot, and are probably derived from a ballad of similar type.

Hostility to wealthy and powerful churchmen was a natural attribute of the mediaeval English outlaw,[3] and many ballads of

---

[1] See note 2 below.

[2] Cf. Major, who doubtless knew many ballads unknown to us: "Nec pauperum bona surripuit, verum eos ex abbatum bonis sublatis opipare pauit." *Historia Majoris Brittaniae,* 1521, fol. LV, b. (Cited, Child, III, 41, col. 2, note).

Cf. also Martin Parker, *A True Tale of Robin Hood* (Child, no. 154), st. 19, 20, 51.

[3] "Hereward and his gang" stormed the abbey of Peterborough because of the appointment of a tyrannous Norman abbot. *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,*

the robbery of rich clerics must have had Robin Hood as their hero. Of some of these, perhaps, the ballads of *Robin Hood and the Bishop* (143), *Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford* (144), and *Robin Hood's Golden Prize* (147), are seventeenth century versions. A passage in *Robin Hood and the Monk*[1] (119) doubtless refers to another. And the more general references by the *Gest*,[2] Major,[3] and Martin Parker[4] to Robin's hostility to the clergy are probably drawn from a knowledge of many more. It is very likely, therefore, that one or more of these ballads of the robbery by Robin Hood of rich churchmen was used by the compiler as the basis of the fourth fit.

---

ed. Thorpe, I, 345-7; Hugo Candidus, *Coenobii Burgensis Historia*, pp. 48-51; *Gesta Herwardi*, in Hardy and Martin's ed. of Gaimar, Rolls Series, I, 395; *Historia Croylandensis*, p. 71; Gaimar, *Lestoric des Engles*, ll. 5555-5562. He is also said to have captured this Norman abbot and held him for an immense ransom. John of Peterborough, *Chronicon Angliae*, p. 47; *Historia Croylandensis*, p. 71; *Gesta Herwardi*, p. 393. Gamelyn was very bitter against the clergy. Cf. the *Tale*, ll. 459-540, and also ll. 779-782 (cited by Child, *Ballads*, III, 51).

[1] "A gret-hedid munke" who has seen Robin at mass in the church at Nottingham is telling the sheriff of it, and says:

"He robbyt me onys of a hundred pound,
Hit shalle neuer out of my mynde." (st. $23^{3,4}$.)

[2] "These bisshoppes and these archebishoppes,
Ye shall them bete and bynde;" (*Gest* st. 15.)

[3] Nec pauperum bona surripuit, verum eos *ex abbatum bonis sublatis* opipare pauit. *Historia Majoris Brittaniae*, fol. LV b.

[4] 15. His chiefest spight to the clergie was,
That lived in monstrous pride;
No one of them he would let passe
Along the high-way side,

16. But first they must to dinner goe,
And afterwards to shrift:
Full many a one he served so,
Thus while he livd by theft.

17. No monkes nor fryers he would let goe
Without paying their fees.

A True Tale of Robin Hood (154).

Stanzas 9, 23-28, tell how Robin, in revenge for his outlawry by the abbot of St. Mary's, robbed him of 12,000 marks, bound him to a tree, made him say mass, and then sent him home with his face turned toward his horse's tail. This corresponds in all details with none of the extant ballads, but may represent a lost ballad. Stanzas 44-46 and 56-62, which relate Robin's defeat of the abbot and the bishop in pitched battle, are also, perhaps, drawn from lost ballads, which further expressed Robin's hostility to the clergy.

Confirmation of this theory, in the shape of positive indications of an older ballad in the texture of the fourth fit, has been furnished by Fricke.[1] Stanza 213^{3-4} relates that as Little John, Much, and Scarlok looked in Bernysdale:

> Than were they ware of *two blacke monkes,*
> Eche on a good palferay.

In 214^{3-4} Little John says:

> "I dare lay my lyfe to wedde
> That *these monkes* haue brought our pay."

But in 216^{1} he says, as if there were but one:

> "*The monke* hath two and fifty men."

By the words in 217^{3-4}:

> "But we bryngē *them* to dyner,
> Our mayster dare we not se."

and in 218^{3-4}:

> "The *formost* monke, his lyfe and his deth
> Is closed in my honde."

he again implies the presence of two monks. The next stanza, however, opens with, "'Abyde chorle monke,' sayd Lytell Johan," and thereafter but one monk is mentioned. It is "the monke," "this monke,"[2] who is entertained and questioned by Robin Hood; and the presence of a second is not even implied except, by a remarkable inconsistency, in stanza 225:

> They brought *the monke* to the lodgē-dore,
> Whether *he* were loth or lefe,
> For to speke with Robyn Hode,
> Maugre in *theyr* tethe.

These discrepancies are explained by Fricke by the assumpthat the fourth fit is based upon a ballad in which two monks

[1] *Die Robin-Hood-Balladen,* pp. 13 ff.

[2] sts. 221^{1-8}, 223^{3}, 225^{1}, 226^{2-3}, 228^{2}, 231^{1}, 232^{1}, and frequently thereafter.

were robbed by Robin Hood.[1] He points out that the seventeenth century ballad of *Robin Hood's Golden Prize* (147), although it contains elements not found in fit IV,[2] relates how two priests[3] who lied about their money were in jolly fashion relieved of it by Robin Hood, and may be a late imitation of the same ballad.[4]

Fricke's inference from the discrepancies of fit IV is, I think, well founded. The contradictory references to two monks and one monk are too numerous and unmistakable to be explained away as copyists' errors, too close together and too obvious to be attributed to the forgetfulness and carelessness of a single author. They can be satisfactorily explained only as the result of the imperfect fusion with the narrative of the *Gest* of an earlier ballad.

Stanza 213 sounds as if it had come almost unchanged from such a ballad. Its brief narration of the approach of the two monks has the vigorous rhythm of the best ballad manner, and it is not difficult to suppose it one of the opening stanzas of a ballad of two monks which the composer of fit IV preserved

---

[1]Aus diesen Inconsequenzen ergiebt sich mit ziemlicher Wahrscheinlichkeit, dass das vierte fytte auf einer Ballade beruhen muss, welche von „Robin Hood und zwei Mönchen" handelte, und in welcher zwei Mönche auf humoristiche Art um ihr Geld geprellt werden. Fricke, p. 13, *op. cit.*

[2]Robin disguises himself as a friar and begs money of the priests. When they deny that they have a penny, he pulls them from their horses and forces them to kneel down and pray for money. At the end of an hour he searches their pockets and finds five hundred pounds. He gives them fifty apiece and keeps the rest. Cf. *The Jests of Scogan*, Hazlitt's *Jest-Books*, II, 151, where a similar story is told of Scogan. Child, IV, 497, col. 1.

[3]Cf.

But as they loked in Bernysdale
By the hyë waye,
Than were they ware of two blacke monkes
Eche on a good palferay.
Lytell Geste, 213.

He had not gone past miles two or three,
But it was his chance to spy
Two lusty priests clad all in black,
Come riding gallantly.
R. H.'s Golden Prize (147), st. 4.

[4]Fricke (p. 13 f) thinks that *Robin Hood's Golden Prize* is the result of a conscious attempt to create a new ballad by varying the story of a ballad originally more similar to fit IV. In support of his contention that the story is in its details a late invention, he quotes from the introduction:

But such a tale as this before
I think there was never none.
Golden Prize (147), 2[1-2]

almost untouched, although at the price of consistency, for the sake of its admirable style.

The occurrence in stanza 218[3] of the words, "The formost monke," indicates pretty clearly that the composer of the fourth fit was aware of the contradiction, and tried to escape it by the explanation that one monk was much more prominent than the other. But in the narrative which follows he has forgotten all such precautions. Except in stanza 225, where he falls into the gross carelessness of beginning with one monk and ending with two,[1] he does not again even hint at the presence of a second monk.

Further on in this fit, however, is a passage not noticed by Fricke, which gives some indications of having belonged to the ballad of two monks. The point, whatever its value, is worth discussing, for the progress of the narrative at this point is by no means easy to follow. The story of the robbery of the monk and the return by the Virgin of the loan to the knight is concluded in stanza 252, and the narrative would be from every point of view more effective, if the monk's departure, which is described in stanzas 258-260, had been placed immediately after this stanza.[2] As it is, the movement of the story is clogged and

---

[1] *The monke* . . Whether *he* were . Maugre in *theyr* tethe.

[2] The narrative would then run as follows:

251. 'Fyll of the best wyne, and do hym drynke,' sayd Robyn,
'And grete well thy lady hende,
And yf she haue nede to Robyn Hode,
A frende she shall hym fynde.

252. 'And yf she nedeth ony more syluer,
Come thou agayne to me,
And, by this token she hath me sent,
She shall haue such thre.'

258. The monke toke the hors with spore,
Ne lenger wolde he abyde:
'Askë to drynkë,' than sayd Robyn,
'Or that ye forther ryde.'

259. 'Nay, for God,' than sayd the monke,
'Me reweth I cam so nere;
For better chepe I myght haue dyned
In Blythe or in Dankestere.'

260. 'Grete well your abbot,' sayd Robyn,
'And your pryour, I you pray,
And byd hym send me such a monke
To dyner euery day.'

its effect somewhat weakened by the interposition of five stanzas (253-257),[1] excellent in themselves, but not appropriate to the situation in which they stand.

In stanza 254 the monk tells Robin that he is on a tour of inspection of the manors of his abbey to investigate the conduct of their reeves, whose reputation evidently resembled that of the reeve in Chaucer's *Prologue*. But in 253 we are informed that his real intention was to go to London and institute a lawsuit against the knight. These stanzas are therefore an excellent contribution to the main narrative of the *Gest*, and in that they supply an additional bond of union between the knight and monk incidents they are evidently the work of the compiler. But they are inappropriately introduced at this climax. Their natural position would be after stanza 233 or 234, where Robin has just asked the monk whence he comes and might well continue by inquiring whither he goes.

Without any connection with what precedes, three spirited stanzas are next introduced,[2] which relate how Robin sent Little John to search the "other corser" (probably we should read "forcer," i.e., "coffer"[3]), and, when the monk protested, said

---

[1]253. The monke was goynge to London ward,
There to holde grete mote,
The knyght that rode so hye on hors,
To brynge hym vnder fote.

254. 'Whether be ye away?' sayd Robyn:
'Syr, to maners in this londe,
To reken with our reues,
That haue done moch wronge.'

255. 'Come now forth, Lytell Johan,
And harken to my tale;
A better yemen I knowe none,
To seke a monkës male.'

256. 'How moch is in yonder other corser?' sayd Robyn,
'The soth must we see:'
'By Our Lady,' than sayd the monke,
'That were no curteysye,

257. 'To bydde a man to dyner,
And syth hym bete and bynde.'
'It is our oldë maner,' sayd Robyn,
'To leue but lytell behynde.'

[2]Sts. 255-257.

[3]F. B. Gummere: *Old English Ballads* (Boston, 1903), p. 318, note on *Gest*, st. 256[1]. Suggestion made by Professor Kittredge.

that it was their old manner to leave but little behind. It is implied but not stated that Robin appropriated the contents of the "other coffer" as he had those of the monk's "male" ($247^{3,4}$). The existence of three such stanzas in excellent ballad style, out of connection with what precedes and follows, and telling only a portion of an incident, is best explained by the supposition that they are inserted from a ballad. Now the incident they tell is a repetition of the searching of the monk's "male" by Little John (246-248); and inasmuch as a ballad of the robbing of two monks has been postulated as the basis of fit IV, it is a plausible hypothesis that stanzas 246-248 are derived from the account, in this hypothetical ballad, of the robbery of one monk, and stanzas 255-257 from the account of the robbery of the other.

No doubt the second of these accounts followed close upon the first. After the two monks had been questioned as to their money, and Little John, having searched the "male" of the first, had proved his untruthfulness, Robin Hood probably told Little John that he was an expert at searching a monk's "male," and then said: "How much is in yonder other forcer?" as he does in the *Gest*. This was also plundered, no doubt, and the monks sent away. In transferring the ballad from two monks to one and fitting it into the *Gest*, the compiler was probably reluctant to sacrifice the episode of the robbery of either. Accordingly, he employed the robbery of the first in his main narrative (sts. 243-252), and in the interval between the robbery and the monk's departure—a point where he had already inserted a couple of stanzas (253 and 254) for another purpose[1]—he introduced three of the best stanzas from the episode of the robbery of the second monk.

Enough has been said to make it clear how strong are the indications throughout the fourth fit that it is based upon a single ballad of Robin Hood and two monks. The change to one monk in the *Gest* is easily explained by the assumption of a natural desire in the compiler for a symmetrical contrast between a single knight who was truthful and a single monk who lied.

[1]See above, p. 22.

Besides this desire, the influence of one or more ballads in which, as in the Eustace story, but one monk was robbed, may also have been operative.

The foregoing analysis of fits I and IV has led to the conclusion that fit I is based upon a ballad of Robin Hood and a poor knight and fit IV upon a ballad of Robin Hood and two rich monks. This conclusion differs from that of Fricke, whom indeed I follow in his derivation of fit IV, but who says concerning the derivation of fit I: "Wir müssen mit Bestimmtheit annehmen, dass fytte I nur eine Nachbildung von fytte IV ist. Was von einem oder zwei Mönchen erzählt wurde, ist auf einen Ritter übertragen worden."[1] The compiler of the *Gest,* that is, knew a ballad in which one or two monks were robbed by Robin Hood, and on this basis worked up a parallel and contrasted account of Robin Hood and a knight. With this newly composed account he began the narrative of the *Gest,* and then by a number of episodes and incidents from other sources or of his own invention united it to the ballad of Robin Hood and the two monks, upon which it was modelled.

It is impossible to deny that the compiler of the *Gest,* whom this study will show to have been exceedingly skilful in the arrangement of his plot, might have constructed the narrative of his first division in this way. But it is a supposition far easier and far more in accord with his affinity to the popular ballad that he obtained his opening adventure not by imitation of a ballad of Robin Hood and two monks, but from a ballad of Robin Hood and a poor knight. The probability of the separate existence of ballads of Robin's respect for honesty and kindness to the poor has already been indicated;[2] and the compiler is much more likely to have begun with one of these than to have performed the feat of keeping in mind a ballad of Robin and two monks, inventing a contrasted narrative of Robin and a poor knight, and leading his poem by a complicated series of adventures up to the original ballad. The theory that fit I as well as fit IV is based upon a ballad should therefore be adopted as better supported, easier, and more natural.

[1] *Die Robin-Hood-Balladen,* p. 14.

[2] See p. 17, note 2.

The process by which these two simple ballads were developed by elaboration, and by the addition of new material, into the first division of the *Gest* (fits I, II, IV) is not difficult to understand. The probability has been already noted that in the ballad of Robin Hood and the Knight which underlies fit I, Robin, finding the knight's statement of his poverty truthful, presented him with a handsome sum of money.[1] The account in fit I as it stands, that Robin merely loaned the money to the knight, and accepted Our Lady as his surety, is probably a later alteration of the simpler ending. It was undoubtedly suggested by some form of a well known miracle of the Virgin in which the Mother of Jesus is accepted as surety for a loan and returns it on the appointed day.

In its essentials this is the story of the miraculous return by God, one of the saints, or the Virgin, of a loan for which the deity or saint had been accepted as "borrow," (i.e., surety)[2] by the creditor. It seems to have originated in a popular interpretation of the well known verse in Proverbs xix, 17: "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again." This text is thus paraphrased by Langland, *Piers Plowman,* B, passus VII, ll. 82-83:

> "For beggeres borwen euermo. and her borghe is god almyȝti,
> To ȝelden hem þat ȝiueth hem · and ȝet vsure more."

In other words, God becomes surety for the money that we give to beggars, and He will repay us that money with interest, either in worldly prosperity or in eternal bliss. With this interpreta-

---

[1]See above, p. 17.

[2]The noun *borrow* is derived from the A.S. *borȝ, borh,* which, like its derivative, means either "a thing deposited as security, a pledge," or, "a surety, hostage" (Murray, *New English Dictionary*). In the *Gest* the word *borrow* has the second of these two meanings. Robin Hood accepts the Virgin as surety for the knight's loan.

It was a common practice in the middle ages to call upon or to take the deity or one of the saints *to borrow,* that is, as surety for one's truth, good faith, or honour. Many examples are quoted by Murray in the *New English Dictionary,* of which may be cited: Gower, *Confessio Amantis,* II, 34. Other examples, illustrating the legal and conversational use of the phrase, are given by Child, *Ballads,* III, p. 52, note. This custom of taking God as security for the truth of one's speech should be kept in mind in the discussion of the growth of the story under consideration.

tion of the text in mind askers of alms are known to have put their requests for a gift into the form of a request for a loan on the security of God.[1] In these anecdotes it is assumed that the only return of the money will be an increase of temporal prosperity or spiritual blessedness. It is easy to see, however, how the popular genius could evolve from such an anecdote a tale of how God literally repaid the amount lent on His security.

The numerous tales of this general type may be divided into two great classes. In the tales of the first class the loan is repaid by an actual miracle of the saint or deity; in the tales of the second class, which is a humorous variant of the first, the person to whom the money is due takes it from a monk whom he regards as the earthly representative of the saint or deity and as the instrument of the return of the loan. Since tales of both classes were probably known to the compiler of the *Gest,* some typical examples of each must now be discussed.

Of the first or serious class the simplest form yet noted is an Arab tale (perhaps borrowed from a Christian source) summarized by Basset[2] from the text of the *Ouefâ-'iât el A'yân.* On the surety of God a man borrows 1,000 dinars from a smith. He goes across the sea and trades with them. Prevented by lack of wind from returning in time to repay the smith on his day, he puts 1,000 dinars into a chest and throws it into the sea, committing it to God. Meanwhile the smith is waiting on the shore; he sees the chest come floating towards him, has it drawn out, opens it, and finds the 1,000 dinars. The traveller, getting a favorable wind, comes to the smith with another 1,000 dinars, but the smith, finding that the first 1,000 dinars were really sent by his debtor, says that God has already paid him.

---

[1]Cf. the anecdote of Bishop Forbes of Corse and his brother William, related as a "traditional story" by James Mitchell in *The Scotsman's Library,* 1825, p. 576, and cited by W. Macmath in Child, IV, 497, col. 1. The brother, who had been unsuccessful in business, went to the bishop with a request for a loan of 1000 marks and offered God Almighty as his surety. The bishop gave him the money, and he departed for the continent and made a fortune.

Professor W. A. Neilson has drawn my attention to "a common Scots anecdote, still current, of a minister who used to quote the above mentioned passage from Proverbs before the collection for the poor, adding, 'If you like your security, come on.'"

[2]René Basset, *Le prêt miraculeusement remboursé. Revue des traditions populaires,* IX, 14-31. The Arab tale is on p. 29.

The first step in the development of this story seems to have been the turning of the creditor into an unbeliever who is converted by the miracle. The following story[1] contains such an unbelieving creditor and such a conversion, but is otherwise quite as simple in outline as the Arabic version: A wealthy spendthrift of Apulia borrows a sum of money from a Jew on the security of St. Nicholas. He crosses to Africa and makes money by trading. Prevented by a storm from reaching Apulia in time to pay the Jew on the day appointed, he prays to God, commends the money to God and to St. Nicholas, and throws it, enclosed in a chest, into the sea. It crosses in one day, and by an inlet reaches the Jew's garden. He is walking there, pulls it out and puts it among his treasures. When the Christian returns, the Jew tells him of this, becomes convinced of the miracle, and is converted.

In a Russian folk-tale[2] corresponding to the above in general outline though different in detail and setting, the surety is not God, Christ, or one of the saints, but the cross on the church. This is a slight indication of the tendency to employ some material thing as a symbol of the deity or saint who becomes surety for the loan. The variations due to locality are the substitution of a Tartar for a Jew and the dropping of 50,000 roubles enclosed in a barrel into the Danube instead of into the sea. Other differences are that the Russian is not detained but forgets his day until reminded by a severe storm; and that a servant of the Tartar sees the cask first and tries to pull it to land; but it escapes her grasp and will come to no one but the Tartar. With a few unimportant exceptions, the folk-tale is otherwise closely parallel to the miracle of St. Nicholas.

In the next development of the story, the symbol of the deity already noticed in the Russian tale takes the form of an image. Debtor and creditor take their stand before this image.

[1]Joly, *Quatre Miracles inédits de S.-Nicolas* (*Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie*, t. IX, 1879, I, pp. 202-222). The miracle under discussion is paraphrased, pp. 210-215; printed in the original Latin, pp. 216-220.

[2]Afanasiev, *Narodnuiya russkiya skazki*, VII, no. 49. Paraphrased in Ralston, *Russian Folk Tales*, p. 27. Cited by Professor Child, III, 52, note.

The debtor formally offers it to the creditor as a representative of the deity whom he has taken as his surety, and prays the deity to return the money to the creditor in case the debtor cannot repay it on the day fixed. The money is miraculously returned by the deity, but the creditor conceals it, and in order to confute and convert him a second miracle is necessary. The image therefore speaks and bears witness that the money is paid; whereupon the creditor is converted.

This marvellous speaking image, the introduction of which doubles the miracle, is either a statue of Christ or of his mother. But if it be of Christ, he is generally represented as a child in his mother's arms, and his mother is generally invoked with him; so that the stories of this type are fittingly classified as miracles of the Virgin.

A widespread story of this type is that in the thirty-third chapter of a Latin collection of miracles of Mary which was printed from a thirteenth century manuscript of Heiligenkreuz in Austria by Bernard Pez at Vienna in 1731[1] and attributed by him to Potho of Priefling near Ratisbon.[2] Word for word it occurs in a large number of other Latin collections in manuscript, mostly of the thirteenth century.[3] In the *Speculum Historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais, book VII, ch. 82, the same story is related. It is not represented as being told to an archdeacon of Liège, like the Potho version, and it varies from this in some of its words and their order; but it is clearly an abbreviation of it.

The story may be summarized as follows: An archdeacon

[1]*Pothonis Liber de Miraculis S.D.G. Mariae*, ed. Bernard Pez, Vienna, 1731, pp. 377 ff. (R. Basset, in *Revue des traditions populaires*, IX, p. 20, says that this book is "devenue introuvable." But Mussafia, in *S. B. der Wiener Akad., Phil.-Hist. Classe*, CXIII, p. 397, note 1, gives a list of several extant copies, and there is one in the Harvard Library.) This miracle reprinted by Unger, *Mariu Saga* (Christiania, 1871), pp. v-ix.

[2]Mussafia shows that the collection cannot have been made by Potho (*Studien zu den mittelalterlichen Marienlegenden*, III, 54-55. See reference below). For convenience, however, it will be generally referred to in what follows as the Potho collection.

[3]Mussafia, *Studien zu den mittelalterlichen Marienlegenden*, I-IV, in *Sitzungsberichte der Wiener Akademie, Phil.-Hist. Classe*, CXIII, 917-994, CXV, 5-92, CXIX, CXXIII.

of Liège, on a pilgrimage, came to the city of Constantinople (*ad Byzanzenam urbem*), and entering a church, found it thronged with a rejoicing crowd. On asking the cause he was told the following story: A citizen of Constantinople who had wasted his substance by lavish expenditure and lavish generosity, requested a loan from a Jew. The Jew insisting upon security, the citizen, who had no one else, offered him Jesus Christ. The Jew, who regarded Jesus as a just man and a prophet, although not divine, agreed to lend the money upon his security. The Christian, being unable, as he said, to produce Jesus Christ in person, told the Jew he would give him his image instead. Moreover, he said that should the money not be paid on the day set by the Jew he would become the Jew's slave forever. Then he led the Jew into the church and, standing before an image of the Virgin and her Child, he made the Jew take the hand of the Child, and thus gave him Jesus Christ as his surety. Then, kneeling down, he prayed: "Lord Jesus Christ, whose image I have given as pledge for this money and whom I have offered to this Jew as my surety, I beg and entreat that if by any chance I am prevented from returning the money to this man on the appointed day, but shall give it to thee, thou wilt return it for me in such manner and form as may please thee."[1] The Jew gave the Christian the money he asked for, and the Christian bought merchandise and sailed far away *ad barbaras regiones,* where by trading he made a large fortune. So deeply was he absorbed by his business that, until the day before his loan was due, he forgot all about it. Then he suddenly remembered that he had promised to pay the Jew on the morrow, and, realizing that he could not reach Constantinople in time, he fell into a swoon. Roused by his servants, he rebuked himself: "Quid meditaris inania? Nonne Dominum tuum Jesum Christum et ejus Genitorem pro te fidejussorem dedisti? Ipsis ergo pecuniam trade, et ut eam tuo creditori, quomodo velint, restituant committe." He put the money he owed the Jew into a chest, threw the chest into the sea, and committed it to God. In one night it reached Con-

[1]This translation of the Christian's prayer is taken from Professor Child's introduction to the *Gest* (*E. and S. Ballads,* vol. III, p. 52, col. 1), where he also briefly summarizes the story.

stantinople. One of the Jew's servants saw the chest and tried to draw it out, but it eluded his grasp. Then the Jew came up, drew it out, removed the money, and hid it under his bed. Shortly afterwards the Christian returned to Constantinople. The Jew taunted him with breaking his word, and when the Christian said that he had paid on the appointed day, the Jew replied that he had no witnesses to prove it. The Christian then brought the Jew before the image of the Virgin and Child. At his prayer the image (of Christ) spoke and testified that the Jew had received and hidden the money. Thereupon the Jew and all his house became Christians. The church and the feast of that day were therefore called *martyrium*, that is, "of the testimony." When the archdeacon of Liège had heard this story he blessed God, who so aids those who worship His Mother.

The popularity and wide extent of this story, not only in Latin but in the vernacular as well, is sufficiently demonstrated by an enumeration of the versions in French, Provençal, Spanish, and Norse which are directly derived from it. The Potho version or something closely akin to it is the source of a longer and more elaborated Old French version in octosyllabic couplets by Gautier de Coincy,[1] and through the medium of Gautier of an Old French miracle play;[2] of a prose Provençal miracle of the Virgin;[3] of a Spanish poetical version by Gonzalo de Berceo in his collection of *Milagros de nuestra Señora*;[4] and of two independent versions in the Old Norse *Mariu Saga*.[5]

---

[1]Gautier de Coincy (c. 1177-1236), *Miracles de la Sainte Vierge*, ed. Poquet (Paris, 1857), cols. 543-552, noted by Child, III, 52 n.

[2]*Miracles de Nostre Dame par Personnages*, ed. G. Paris et U. Robert (Paris, 1876-93), VI, pp. 171-223, no. 35, noted by Child, III, 52 n.

See Jensen, *Die Miracles de Nostre Dame par personnages in ihrem Verhältniss zu Gautier de Coincy* (Bonn, 1892), pp. 61-75, for proof that the play is derived from Gautier de Coincy.

[3]*Miracles de Notre Dame en Provençal* (Romania VIII), pp. 16-18, noted by Child, III, 52 n.

[4]Printed in Tomas Antonio Sanchez, *Poesias castellanas anteriares al siglo XV* (Madrid, 1779-90), vol. II, p. 367, no. 23. Translated by R. Basset in article already cited (*Revue des traditions populaires*, IX, 14-19). Noted by Child, III, 52 n.

[5]C. R. Unger, *Mariu Saga* (Christiania, 1871), pp. 87-92, and pp. 1064-1067. Noted by Child, III, 52 n.

There is another group of stories of this miracle in which the Christian and the Jew are named respectively Theodorus and Abraham, and to this group belong those versions which are closest to the incident in the *Gest of Robin Hood*. Five versions in Latin manuscript collections are noted by Mussafia.[1] Old French metrical versions occur in the collections of miracles in MS. Egerton 612 and MS. Royal 20, B XIV, both in the British Museum,[2] and there is a Middle English metrical version in the Vernon MS.[3] The Egerton and Vernon versions are the only two printed, and without access to the manuscripts it is impossible to determine their relations to the other members of the group.[4]

---

[1]One version occurs in the following three collections:
Toulouse 482 (12th century), no. 46 (Mussafia, *S.B.* CXV, p. 26).
Balliol Coll. Oxford 240 (12th cent.) no. 47 (ibid., p. 33).
Cambridge, Mm. 6. 15 (14th cent.) fol. 109 ff, no. 14 (ibid. p. 37).

Another occurs in:
Paris lat. 5562 (end of 13th cent.) no. 11 (ibid., p. 46).
Darmstadt, Hofbibliothek 703 (14th cent.) no. 16 (ibid. *S.B.* CXXIII, p. 6).

Another in:
Paris Bibl. Nat. lat. 10770 (14th cent.) no. 1 (ibid. *S.B.* CXIX, 24).

Another version in a collection of Latin poems on the miracles of Mary by Nigellus de longo campo (perhaps Nigel Wireker, Mussafia, S.B. CXIX, p. 3). Cotton MS. Vespas. D. 19, British Museum (13th cent.) fol. 5-24, no. 14. (Mussafia, *S.B.* CXIX, p. 5.)

A fifth version is in a Latin prose collection of miracles of Mary by William of Malmesbury, Lib. at Salisbury, MS. 97 (13th cent.), ch. 38. (Mussafia, *S.B.* CXXIII, pp. 18-20.)

[2]Egerton, 612, No. 29 (printed by Karl Neuhaus, *Adgars Marienlegenden.* Foerster, *Altfranz. Bibl.,* IX, 176-185): Royal 20 B XIV, III, 17.

[3]Horstmann, *Die Altenglischen Marienlegenden des MS. Vernon,* Herrig's *Archiv,* LVI, no. VI, pp. 232-234.

[4]The narrative of a Russian traveller who made a pilgrimage to Constantinople in the 15th century preserves a story of a Jew's loan miraculously returned, which was current in Constantinople at the time of his visit and was attached to a certain image of Christ. The story gave to the Christian and the Jew the names of Theodorus and Abraham, respectively, but differed in its conclusion from the Edgerton and Vernon versions (*Description de Constantinople* in the *Itinéraires russes,* translated by Mme B. de Khitrowo, vol. I, Geneva, 1889, part 1, ch. ix, pp. 233-234. Cited by Basset, p. 20). An Arabian version, the story of Tâdoros, merchant of Constantinople, and the Jew, Abraham, similar, according to Basset, to the above story, is in a MS. at the Bibliothèque Nationale, suppl. cir. n. 96, f. 143-153. The existence of these versions would seem to indicate the derivation of this group from a story current in Constantinople. But without the actual texts of these and the Latin versions investigation is impossible.

The Egerton version is the twenty-ninth poem of a collection of miracles of the Virgin in Anglo-French, composed by William Adgar, a monk, of the latter part of the twelfth century.[1] The story, which differs in several important points from the forms already considered, may be summarized as follows: Tierri, a merchant of Constantinople and a man of honesty and integrity, fell into poverty and, going to a Jew named Abraham, asked him to lend him some money. The Jew would do nothing without security. Tierri cried to Mary for counsel, and then said:

> "Mult riche plegge t'en durrai;
> Sainte Marie, ma salu;
> La mere mun Seignur Jhesu."

The Jew accepted this proposal, and they went before an image of Mary in the church of Hagia Sophia. Tierri said: "I give you in pledge this Lady, whose image you see here, and I promise faithfully to return your money on the appointed day." The Jew gave Tierri as much money as he asked for, and Tierri sailed for Alexandria, where he won a great fortune. At the close of a year he made preparations to keep his day; but a frightful storm held his ship in port, and he saw that he should not reach Constantinople in time. Therefore he put the money he owed the Jew into a chest, added a letter directing it to Abraham, and having prayed Our Lady to take it to the Jew, he cast the chest into the sea. In one night, by the power of Our Lady, the chest floated from Alexandria to Constantinople. Walking along the shore next morning the Jew found the chest, but hid it in his treasury and told no one. When Tierri returned to Constantinople the Jew demanded his money. Tierri said, "If you will swear before the image of Our Lady that you have not received the money, and if no punishment falls on you as a result, I will pay you." The Jew went to the church and swore the oath; but God put into the image the power of speech, and it spoke in the hearing of all: "Abraham! Abraham! you lie! you have hidden the chest and the money." The Christians

[1] Neuhaus, *Adgar's Marienlegenden*, no. 29. (Foerster's *Altfranz. Bibl.*, IX, 176-185).

rejoiced greatly and the Jew was confounded and became a Christian.

This story differs from the Potho version in the following points: (1) The Christian and the Jew are named Tierri and Abraham in this version, but are not named in Potho. (2) Tierri's honesty and honour are emphasized rather than his extravagance as in Potho. (3) In Adgar, Mary and not her Son is offered by Tierri as his surety. (4) Instead of forgetting his day as in Potho, Tierri is prevented from keeping it by a storm. (5) Tierri puts a letter into the chest which he throws into the sea, directing the money to the Jew. (6) Abraham himself discovers the chest while walking along the shore. There is no servant-episode. None but the Jew knows about the chest.

The English version is the sixth of a collection of nine miracles of Mary in the Vernon MS.[1] (late fourteenth century). Though much more concisely told than the Adgar version, it agrees with it and disagrees with all the versions of the Potho group in all except one of the points enumerated above. The Jew is named Abraham and the Christian Theodorus.[2] Theodorus is called "full of lewte." The Virgin and not Christ is offered as surety. Theodorus puts a letter into the chest, and Abraham alone finds the chest and tells no one of it. But the failure of Theodorus to keep his day by appearing in person is attributed, as in the Russian and Potho versions, to his forgetfulness, and not to any storm or lack of wind.[3] Without access to the Latin versions of this story, the problem of the relations between the French and the English version cannot be solved. It is sufficient for our purposes to find the story in an English vernacular version of a period not later than the fourteenth century.[4]

---

[1]Horstmann, *Die Altenglischen Marienlegenden des MS. Vernon*, VI (Herrig's *Archiv*, 56, pp. 232-234.)

[2]Tierri is, of course, the French form of Theodorus.

[3]As in the Arabian tale (see above, p. 26) the miracle of St. Nicholas (p. 27), and in Adgar, no. 29, ll. 197-206.

[4]Resemblances between this English version and the story in the *Gest* are considered below, p. 37 ff.

The second or jocose class of stories of the return by the deity or a saint of a loan for which he has become responsible represents the creditor as taking the amount loaned from a monk, whom he regards as a representative of the divine surety. Stories of this class naturally take the form not of a mediaeval miracle but of a mediaeval *exemplum*. The class, as Professor Child says, "is an old one, and was probably known in some form wherever monks were known."[1] An early instance is an *exemplum* in the *Sermones Vulgares* of Jacques de Vitry[2] which seems to be the source of a longer version in Pauli's *Schimpf und Ernst*, completed in 1519, published in 1522,[3] and of a fifteenth century Catalan version in a collection of *exempla*, miracles, gests and fables.[4] A similar story also occurs in a fif-

[1]*Eng. and Scot. Ballads*, III, p. 53, col. 2. For cases of this story see Oesterley's ed. of Pauli's *Schimpf und Ernst*, p. 480, Child, III, p. 54, col. 1, and Crane, *op. cit.* in note below, p. 165.

[2]Printed by T. F. Crane in *The Exempla or Illustrative Stories from the Sermones Vulgares of Jacques de Vitry* (published for the Folk Lore Society in 1890), no. LXIX, pp. 30, 31.

[3]Ed. Oesterley, pp. 49-50. (Stuttgart, 1866.)

The resemblances between Jacques de Vitry's and Pauli's version are striking. For example, the scene of the monk's seizure:

Miles . . cum quodam die equitaret, vidit quemdam monachum valde pinguem et rubicundum qui optimum palefridum equitabat, et more secularium pompose incedebat. At miles cepit *armigeris* dicere: "Ecce monachus iste *qui debuisset equitare asinum*, meliorem habet equum quam ego." Et accedens tenuit equum monachi per frenum et dixit monacho: "Cujus estis?" Et ille: "Non habeo dominum nisi Deum."

Jacques de Vitry, in Crane's ed., p. 30.

Es fügt sich uff ein zeit, dass der iuncker vberfelt reit, und zwei knecht ritten mit im, da begegnet inen ein apt oder ein prior vff zweien hübschen pferden, mit einem knecht. Und der iuncker sprach *zu seinen zweien knechten*, sehen ir lieben gesellen, wie reitet der münch mit zweien reisigen pferden, vnd reit als kostlich als ein ritter, *er solt vff einem essel reiten*, sein gewarnt, wir wöllen ein dat thun. *Da er nun zu inen kam, da greift er dem pfert in den zaum, vnd sprach.* Her wer seien ir, wer ist üwer her. Der münch sprach, ich bin ein gottes diener, vnd got is mein her.

Pauli, ed. Oesterley, p. 50.

[4]*Recull de Eximplis e Miracles, Gestes e Faules e altres legendes ordenades per A-B-C, tretes de un manuscrit en pergami del començament del segle XV, ara per primera volta estampades* (Barcelona: *Biblioteca Catalana*, 1880-1888). This *exemplum* is cited by Crane, *op. cit.*, p. 165, whose reference, however, is misleading. He gives it as *Recull de Eximplis* CCCCLX,

teenth century Latin collection of *exempla* entitled *Scala Celi,*[1] and with original and amusing variations, in the Old French fabliau, *Du povre Mercier.*[2]

The version in *Schimpf und Ernst,* which is the liveliest version of the simple story, may be summarized as follows: A nobleman has taken prisoner in war a burgher's son. After the man has been in prison for some time, he sends for his captor and says: "Dear lord, I lie here and do neither you nor myself any good, for my friends will not send me 100 gulders with which to ransom myself. Now let me go home, and in eight weeks I shall bring you the money." The baron said: "Whom will you give me as surety?" The prisoner answered: "ich wil euch got den herren zu einem bürgen geben, und wil euch einen eid schweren, bei den selbigen bürgen das zu halten." The baron accepts this arrangement and lets the man go. He sells all that he has, but cannot get the money together in time, and is three weeks overdue. After the term for payment has expired, the baron is out riding one day with his two servants, when they see a monk with his servant, on

---

whereas it is really the four hundred and fortieth exemplum on page 69 of volume II. But this exemplum is numbered CCCCLX instead of CCCCXL as it should be. Crane points out that this version is drawn directly from that of Jacques de Vitry. This is expressly stated in the summary at the beginning:

"Eximpli con un hom qui fon pres en una batalla dona a Deu per fermança del seu rescat, *segons recompte Jacme de Vitriach.*"

The *exemplum* is throughout a free paraphrase of Vitry, and as in the case of Pauli's version, is particularly close to him in the account of the capture of the monk, e.g..

Ecce monachus iste qui debuisset equitare asinum, meliorem habet equum quam ego.	Vejats aquest monge qui deuria caualler en un ase, e caualca mellor palaffre que no fas jo.
Jacques de Vitry, LXIX, p. 30.	Recull de eximplis, II, p. 70.

Crane says (p. 165) that this story "is the subject of the first four fyttes of 'A Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode.'" This is an inaccurate statement, even if we exclude the third fit, which, of course, has nothing to do with this story.

[1] *Scala Celi,* a collection of exempla by Johannes Gobius Junior, published at Ulm in 1480, p. 159 b.

[2] Barbazan et Méon, *Fabliaux et Contes,* III, p. 17 ff.
Montaiglon et Raynaud, *Fabliaux et Contes,* II, p. 114 ff.
Legrand d'Aussy, *Fabliaux* (ed. of 1829), III, p. 93.
Cited by Child, III, 54, col. 1.

two fine horses. "See, fellows," said the baron, "how the monk rides with his two great horses as if he were a knight; he should ride upon an ass; come, we will play him a turn." So saying, he rode up to the monk and seized his bridle, saying: "Who are you? Who is your lord?" The monk said: "I am God's servant and he is my lord." The nobleman answered: "You come at the right time: I had a prisoner and let him go; he gave me your lord as a pledge and security. Now I cannot get anything from him, he is too powerful for me, therefore I will attack his servants." Then he took the monk to his castle and robbed him of all he had. Later the burgher's son returned with his ransom, begging the nobleman to forgive him, since he could not raise the money any sooner. But the nobleman said: "Good fellow, stand up and keep your money, and go wherever you please, for your surety has released you from paying your ransom."[1]

That part of the narrative of fits I, II, and IV of the *Gest* which unites the two separable and apparently once independent incidents of the robbery of the knight and of the monks, may, aside from all elaboration, be summarized as follows: The knight, whom Robin Hood had refrained from robbing on account of his honesty, borrows four hundred pounds from him on the security of Our Lady. A twelvemonth later, when the money is due, the knight, who has the money ready and has started out to pay it, is detained by the necessity of helping a yeoman in trouble. Meanwhile Robin Hood's men capture a monk of St. Mary Abbey, from whom, as servant of Our Lady, Robin takes twice the amount for which she had become security. When the knight arrives he proffers Robin the four hundred pounds, but Robin, since Our Lady has already discharged the debt, refuses to take a penny.

This narrative belongs unquestionably to the second of the two classes of stories just discussed; and its similarity to the tale in *Schimpf und Ernst* and in Vitry proves conclusively that it was derived from a related source. Either as an *exemplum* in a sermon or as a floating anecdote it is evident that the story entered England, became known to the compiler of the *Gest*, and

[1]Summary slightly altered from Child, *English and Scottish Ballads*, vol. III, pp. 53-54.

was employed by him to connect the two independent ballads. There is evidence, however, that he drew suggestions as well from a story of the first class—an actual miracle of the Virgin. In the first place, the fact that no other instance has been found of a story of the second or jocose class in which the Virgin was taken as surety creates a presumption that the compiler of the *Gest* drew this feature from a story of an actual miracle. In the second place, the two stories of the first class in which the Virgin is expressly said to perform the miracle both occur in England at periods anterior to or contemporary with the composition of the *Gest*. In the third place, the Vernon miracle, the one of these two versions written in England that is in English, has several verbal parallels with the *Gest*.

Both Theodorus and the knight complain that their friends have deserted them:

þe Jeuh onswerde . wiþ gret honour:
Loke hou þou maiht . make me seur
Me to paye . at certeyn day,
And þe to helpe . I schal assay.
Theodorus seide: . icham be hynde,
ffor me þer wol . uo Mon him bynde:
he þat sum tyme . was my fere
Mi passeþ bi . wiþ outen chere.[1]

62. 'Hast thou any frende,' sayde Robin,
'Thy borowe that woldē be?'

59. 'Where be thy frendēs?' sayd Robyn:
'Syr, neuer one wol me knowe;
While I was ryche ynowe at home
Great boste thau wolde they blowe.

60. 'And nowe they renne away fro me,
As bestis on a rowe;
They take no more hede of me
Thanne they had me neuer sawe.'[2]

The merchant offers the Virgin as his surety in terms similar to those used by the knight in the *Gest:*

But ȝif þou dorstest . be so hardi
To take vr ladi . seinte Mari
ffor my Borw, . be Mi ffay,
I . schulde þe pay well . at þi day.[3]

65. 'I haue none other,' sayde the knyght,
'The sothe for to say,
But yf yt be Our derē Lady
She fayled me neuer or thys day.'[4]

[1] Ed. Horstmann, ll. 23-30.
[2] *Gest of R. H.* (117).
[3] ll. 31-34.
[4] *Gest of R. H.* (117).

The Jew's answer accepting the offer is similar to that of Robin Hood:

þe Jeuh seide: . my good feere,
I graunte þe, sire, . þi preyere,
ffor I . haue herd . ofte siþe
þat ladi is . Corteis and Bliþe,
Men seiþ . heo wol hem *neuer fayle*
þat in hir seruise wol trauayle.[1]

'By dere worthy God,' sayde Robyn,
'To seche all Englonde thorowe,
Yet fonde I neuer to my pay
A moche better borowe.'[2]
(with *neuer fayle*, cf. *Gest*, 65[4], quoted above).

For these reasons, and because the great popularity of the miracles of Mary and their frequent reading in church[3] must have made them familiar to the compiler of the *Gest*, it is very probable that he derived the suggestion for the knight's offer of Our Lady as his borrow from some version of the miracle current in England, possibly from the Vernon version itself; and that he drew the story of the return of the loan from some form of the *exemplum*. It is not difficult to conceive the manner in which he went to work.[4] Knowing the simple ballad already postulated, in which Robin Hood, having questioned and searched a poor knight and found him truthful, gave him a large sum of money to relieve his distress, and casting about in his mind for some method of lengthening it and combining it with other ballads, he thought of the tale of the debtor who offered Our Lady as surety for his loan. This incident, and Robin Hood's

---

[1] ll. 35-40.

[2] *Gest of R. H.*, st. 66.

[3] The miracles of Mary were read in church. A collection exists which is expressly stated in the MS. to be intended for such reading. In MS. Cambray 739 the rubric at the head of the collection reads: *Incipiunt miracula beatissimae virginis Mariae, quae dicuntur ad matutinas, quando agitur de S. Maria privatis noctibus.* Mussafia, *Studien zu den mittelalterlichen Marienlegenden.* (*Sitzungsberichte de Wiener Akad., Phil.-Hist. Classe,* CXIII, p. 975.)

[4] There is, of course, a possibility that the fusion of the knight and the monk ballad was done by some one who preceded the compiler. There is good evidence, however, that it was he who fused the ballads of fits V and VI (cf., pp. 85, 86, below), and his skill in that fusion is an indication that he may also have been at work in fits I and IV. There is no hint in these fits of earlier fusion, and their combiner is, for convenience and for the avoidance of undue complication, identified in this analysis with the compiler of the whole *Gest*.

well known devotion to Our Lady,[1] doubtless suggested to the

[1]Earlier in the *Gest* we are told that Robin Hood was wont to hear three masses every day:

9. The one in the worship of the Fader,
And another of the Holy Gost,
The thirde of Our derë Lady,
That he loued allther moste.

10. Robyn loued Oure derë Lady;
For dout of dydly synne,
Wolde he neuer do compani harme
That any woman was in.

In the single ballads are the following references to Robin's devotion to Our Lady:

During his fight with Guy of Gisborne, Robin stumbles and is hit by Guy on the left side:

39. 'Ah, deere Lady!' sayd Robin Hoode,
'Thou art both mother and may!
I thinke it was neuer mans destinye
To dye before his day.'

40. Robin thought on Our Lady deere,
And soone leapt vp againe.
R. H. and Guy of Gisborne (118).

In *Robin Hood and the Monk* (119) we read:

7^{3-4}. 'To-day wil I to Notyngham,' said Robyn,
With þe myght of mylde Marye.'

17. Whan Robyn came to Notyngham,
Sertenly withouten layn,
He prayed to God and myld Mary
To bring hym out saue agayn.

18. He gos in to Saynt Mary chirch,
And kneled down before the rode.

When Robin's men learn of his capture, Little John says to them:

34. He has seruyd Oure Lady many a day,
And ȝet wil, securly;
þerfor I trust in her specialy
No wyckud deth shal he dye.

Stanza 3 of *Robin Hood and the Potter* tells us that:

Roben Hood was the yeman's name,
That was boyt corteys and ffre;
Ffor the loffe of owre ladey,
All wemen werschepyd he. (See also st. 28^3.)

Devotion to the Virgin was an attribute not uncommon in outlaws. Professor Child cites the tale found in the *Golden Legend* and other collections (*Legenda Aurea*, c. 51, Grässe, p. 221; Von der Hagen, in *Gesammtabenteuer*, III, 563, no. 86; Morlini, *Novellae*, Paris, 1885, p. 269, no. 17, etc.; all cited by Child, III, p. 51) of a man who had a castle by a public road and robbed all who passed, but said his Ave every day and was thus saved

compiler that he might change Robin's gift into a loan and make him accept Our Lady as surety for his payment, as the creditor in the miracle had done.

Having made this change, the compiler of the *Gest* would have to go on and tell whether the knight kept his day or whether Our Lady was called upon to answer for him. The ending of the miracle of Our Lady could not have been used for this purpose; the miraculous return of the loan by water could not have been transferred to Barnsdale Forest; and any form of miraculous payment would have been incongruous in the Robin Hood

---

from a devil, who, in the form of a steward, was waiting to seize him whenever he should omit it.

The sixth miracle of the Potho collection (ed. Pez, p. 315) tells of a certain thief—"Fur quidam qui vocabatur Eppo, multotiens res alienas rapiebat, aliorumque substantiis furtim ablatis tam se quam suos alebat. Attamen Sanctam Domini matrem venerabatur ex corde, quam etiam, dum ad latrocinandum pergebat exorando salutabat devotissime." Eppo's practice was closely similar to Robin Hood's, and like Robin he was helped by Our Lady in time of danger. In his case, however, an actual miracle was performed for his rescue. He was captured and condemned to be hanged. But no sooner had his feet left the ground than Our Lady appeared to him and sustained him with her own hands for the space of two days. The executioners, returning and finding him alive and well, tried to pierce his throat, but the Virgin protected it with her hands. He told them of the marvel, and "for the love of God" they released him. He became a monk and died in the service of Mary.

There is an analogous story in the *Scala Celi* of Johannes Gobius, Ulm, 1480. A robber is told by a poor woman that whoever fasts on the Sabbath in honour of the Virgin will never die without full confession. Thereupon the robber vows to fast on the Sabbath perpetually. After having kept this vow for many years, he is captured and beheaded. When his head is cut off, it cries out continually: "Confession, confession." A priest is sent for. He places the head upon the body and it is reunited. The robber says that the devils are waiting for his soul, but the Virgin will not let it leave "for the love of God" they released him. He became a monk and died in peace. (Cited by Mussafia, *Studien*, III, p. 43, *S.B.*, CXIX.)

The *Speculum Exemplorum* collected by Aegidius Aurifaber contains the same story with a few changes of detail. It is localized in Normandy, for instance, and the head is thrown down into a valley, whence it cries: "Virgo, Sancta Maria, da veram confessionem." See ed. of 1487, V, lxiii.

It is easy to see why so many outlaws were devoted to the Virgin. A human figure, with all a woman's tenderness and pity, she stood as a mediator between the mediaeval Catholic and God, mercifully tempering the rigour of divine justice as even her Son was not felt to do. The embodiment to the mediaeval mind of divine mercy, she was represented as satisfied with devout worship as a reparation for sin, and was even credited in the miracles with forgiveness of the most atrocious crimes in those who said their Aves regularly. It is easy to see, therefore, how an outlaw, believing himself justified in his war on society, would be particularly devoted to a saint or deity whose femininity and pity inclined her to mercy.

story. Clearly it was necessary to drop this ending entirely and to adopt some other method for the return of Robin's loan.

At this point the *exemplum,* the humorous form of the story, would inevitably come into the compiler's mind. Why should not Robin Hood, like the freebooting nobleman of that tale, capture a monk, whom the compiler might represent as attached to a monastery of Our Lady, and take from him, as representative of the knight's surety, the amount of money which the knight had borrowed, and which by some accident he had not paid at the stipulated time? This happy conception made possible the utilization of the ballad of Robin Hood's capture and robbery of two monks, just postulated as underlying fit IV. With a few additions and alterations, such as the suppression of one of the monks, the insertion of Robin Hood's explanation about the loan (e.g., sts. 232^3-242) and the account of the knight's return (261-280), the compiler could complete his story of Robin's loan by simply reproducing the substance of this ballad. Thus the ballad of Robin's relief of the poor knight and the ballad of his robbery of the two monks were bound together, by the use of the miracle of the Virgin and by the humorous variant of the same story current in mediaeval *exempla,* into a well-knit tale of how Robin, on the security of the Virgin, lent a poor but truthful knight four hundred pounds, and, when the knight failed to keep his day, took twice the amount from a rich but lying monk of her abbey.

The narrative of the *Gest* might have passed at once or in a few stanzas from the departure of the knight with Robin's loan to his non-appearance on the appointed day, without relating in any detail how he spent the interval. The compiler, however, has further elaborated his narrative by devoting to the knight's adventures during the year which elapsed before he paid his debt the whole of the second fit. This division of the poem relates how the knight, by means of the four hundred pounds which had been loaned him by Robin Hood, redeemed his land from the abbot of St. Mary's (sts. 84-129), raised four hundred pounds to repay Robin's loan (130), set out on the day appointed with one hundred men, bearing one hundred bows and sheaves

of arrows as a present to Robin, and went to Barnsdale to keep his day (131-134); and how he was delayed by helping a good yeoman who was hard bestead at a wrestling match (135-143).

The identification of the knight's creditor with the abbot of St. Mary's, and of the monk whom Robin plundered with the high cellarer of the abbey, was doubtless the first step in the process of elaboration. By this master-stroke of narrative construction, the very monastery to which the knight had been in debt was made the agent of the return to Robin of his loan to the knight; and by a fine piece of poetic justice, the high cellarer, who in sts. 91-93 shows utter callousness to the fate of the knight, is the very monk from whom, as messenger of Our Lady, Robin takes the amount of the knight's debt.

A further method of elaboration has been adopted by the compiler of the *Gest*. In order to lengthen and enrich the narrative he has made the knight enter the monastery in poor clothes, tell the abbot that he cannot pay him, and, on his refusal to grant an extension of time, astonish him by paying his debt in full. This additional episode, which occupies the larger portion of the second fit (sts. 84-126[2]), is effective in itself and aids the general narrative by exposing the pitilessness and greed of the abbot and of the monk whom Robin afterwards plunders. It may have been invented by the compiler of the *Gest*. Grounds are not lacking, however, for the assumption that this narrative was based upon or perhaps only suggested by a ballad.

There is, in the first place, one rather serious discrepancy between the second fit and the first. When the abbot, in the second fit (sts. 86, 87), tells his convent that the knight's lands will be forfeited unless he pay his debt that very day, the prior urges him not to make the seizure and appeals to his pity as follows:

> "The knyght is ferre beyonde the see,
> In Englonde is his ryght,
> And suffreth honger and colde,
> And many a sory nyght." (St. 89.)

When the knight with a finely mounted retinue has ridden nearly to the gates of the abbey, he prepares for the deception

with which he is about to test the abbot by ordering his men to put on poor clothes:

Than bespake that gentyll knyght
Untyll his meynë:
Now put on your symple wedes
That ye brought fro the see. (St. 97.)

In the second fit, then, the knight is represented as having lately been in foreign parts beyond the sea, where he has endured many hardships, and whence he and his men have returned in plain garments.[1] So recent has been their arrival that the abbot of St. Mary's, to whom the knight owes four hundred pounds, has not yet heard of it.[2]

But this account of a recent return from over-seas is inconsistent with the narrative of fit I. Questioned by Robin Hood as to the cause of his poverty and distress, the knight tells how, for the purpose of defending his son, who had slain a knight and a squire, he borrowed four hundred pounds on the security of his lands from the abbot of St. Mary's; how his lands will be forfeited to the abbot if he cannot pay the four hundred pounds upon a certain day; and how none of his friends will help him raise this sum. Robin asks him what will become of him if he loses his land:

56. 'Nowe and thou lese thy lond,' sayde Robyn,
'What woll fall of the?'
'Hastely I wol me buske,' sayd the knyght,
'Ouer the saltë see,

57. 'And se where Criste was quyke and dede,
On the mount of Caluerë.'

---

[1]The contrast between the "symple wedes" and the excellent horses (so much admired by the porter, st. 100-101) of the knight and his retinue reminds one of the equipment of Chaucer's knight:

But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors were gode, but he was nat gay.
Of fustian he wered a gipoun
Al bismotered with his habergeoun;
For he was late y-come from his viage.
Prologue, Group A, ll. 73-77.

[2]St. 89^{1-2}
Cf. also stanza 92^{1-2}:
"He is dede or hanged," sayd the monke,
"By God that bought me dere."

The knight intends to cross the sea and visit the Holy Land, if his land is forfeited. But the loan which Robin makes him immediately after his utterance of this intention makes such a pilgrimage unnecessary. It is evident that the knight went directly from Robin Hood to the abbot and paid him the four hundred pounds he had received from Robin. If, therefore, the knight had been beyond the sea at all it must have been before he met Robin. He gives no hint of such a voyage, and the fact that he is planning a journey to Palestine makes it extremely unlikely that he has just returned from abroad.[1]

In short, we have, in the second fit, two references to a voyage not provided for in the account, in the first fit, of the knight's previous troubles. This voyage may, of course, have been invented as an afterthought by the compiler of the *Gest*. But, inasmuch as it is not an essential part of his narrative, it is more likely to have been suggested to him by some tale or ballad.

Another discrepancy between the two fits points in the same direction. At the end of fit I, as the knight is about to depart, Robin calls it shame for him to ride without attendants and gives him Little John "to be his knave."[2] But in fit II, stanza 97 ff.

---

[1]When the knight has the interview with Robin Hood, the day for the payment of his debt is close at hand. For the account of his visit to the abbey immediately follows (cf. sts. 83, 84), and it occurs on the very day when the debt is due (st. $87^{3,4}$). He had borrowed the money a twelvemonth before (st. $86^{3,4}$). Consequently when he was brought before Robin Hood he had owed the money almost a year. Concerning his activities during that year he does not tell us directly. It is evident that he tried and failed to raise money from his friends (sts. 59, 60). It is very improbable that a knight in his position with a great debt to raise would leave the country. In fit I the knight makes no reference to any journey overseas. It is probable, therefore, that he had not left England within a year. Now this is certainly inconsistent with fit II, in which the knight is represented as freshly arrived from across the sea (sts. 89, 97).

[2]80. 'It were greate shamë,' sayde Robyn,
'A knight alone to ryde,
Withoutë squyre, yoman, or page,
To walkë by his syde.

81. 'I shall the lende Litell John, my man,
For he shalbe thy knaue;
In a yeman's stede he may the stande,
If thou greate nedë haue.'

he has a well mounted following,[1] and Little John (after stanza 84)[2] is not mentioned. This sudden change in the number of his followers and the disappearance of Little John are not properly explained. Robin's loan was no more than enough to enable him to pay the abbot, and the presents Robin gave him were not sufficient to procure him new followers (see stanzas 70-78). Little John as the knight's servant could have furnished some excellent touches of humour in the scene at the abbey, and on this account his omission is all the more singular.

Like the introduction of the knight's return from over-seas, this alteration in the knight's attendants seems to point to the influence of a ballad or tale rather than to the compiler's own invention. The compiler of the *Gest* might have known a ballad in which a man whose lands were held by another and who had just returned with money and followers from exile beyond the seas, entered his hall in poor garments, and was contemptuously treated by the lord and some of his guests, but in the end surprised them all by shaking out a bag of gold and redeeming his land.

In the ballad of *The Heir of Linne* (267), a young man who has sold his lands to one John o' the Scales and come to abject poverty, opens a bill which his father had left him to be read in extremity, and is directed by it to three chests of gold and silver. He fills with gold the bags he has been using for begging and goes to John o' the Scales's house. John, his wife, and three lords are sitting at the head of the table. The former lord of Linne asks John's wife " to trust him one shot " that he may sit

---

[1]97. Then bespake that gentyll knyght
Untyll *hys meynë.*

100. The porter swore a full grete othe,
'By God that madë me,
Here be the best coresed hors
That euer yet sawe I me.

[2]84. Then spake that gentyll knyght,
To Lytel Johan gan he saye,
'To-morrowe I must to Yorke toune,
To Saynt Mary abbay.'

This is the last reference to Little John in fit II. He is taken up, as if he had been forgotten, in fit III, st. 144.

down with them. She refuses to trust him a penny. "A good fellow" who sits next to John o' the Scales offers to lend the former lord forty pence and other forty if need be. This enables the spendthrift to sit down with the rest. John o' the Scales jestingly offers to sell back the lands twenty pounds cheaper than he bought them. The former lord calls all present to witness to the offer, and casts John a God's penny to bind the bargain. Then he opens his bags and counts out the money over the board. He is again lord of Linne.

The redemption of his lands by the heir of Linne is similar in more than one particular to the redemption of his by the knight in the *Gest*. Each comes into the hall meanly clad and suppliant in attitude as though still poor; each receives rough and contemptuous treatment; each counts out the money when it is least expected and brings the scene to a striking climax. Each gets the better of the holder of his lands through the device of concealing his good fortune. The knight by this means tests the disposition of the abbot, and, finding him quite merciless, pays him nothing but the principal to which he is legally entitled; the Heir of Linne's pretended poverty makes possible John o' the Scales's jesting agreement to sell him back the land twenty pounds cheaper and the Heir's suddenly taking him at his word.

Clearly a ballad of the redemption of an inheritance containing a scene like that in the hall of the lord of Linne could well have suggested the corresponding scene in the *Gest*. If such a ballad was used by the compiler as the foundation for this scene, it probably included an account of the return of the disinherited man from beyond the sea, attended by several followers, just before he came to claim his inheritance. What he had been doing beyond the sea, and how he obtained the money to release his lands, are matters of conjecture. To assume that the compiler of the *Gest* drew suggestions from a ballad of the features indicated seems, however, to explain most satisfactorily the structure of the first part of fit II (sts. 84-129).

Stanzas 130-134 bridge over the interval between the knight's joyful return to his home in Verysdale and his setting out with one hundred men to pay Robin his loan—a space of

almost a year. In stanzas 135-142 we have a little episode, introduced here primarily, no doubt, for the purpose of accounting for the knight's tardiness in keeping his day; secondly, to give richness and variety to the narrative.

In the various forms, serious and comic, of the story of the return of a loan by a saint or deity, two reasons have been noted for the non-appearance of the debtor—forgetfulness and external hindrance.[1] It is to the latter cause that the knight's delay is here attributed.

The knight had his four hundred pounds ready to pay Robin, besides some handsome presents for him. With one hundred men he set out to keep his day. But on the way he came upon a wrestling-match. All the best yeomen of the West Countree—i.e., the West Riding of Yorkshire—had assembled to compete for an unusually large number of prizes—a bull, a courser with gold-adorned saddle and bridle, a pair of gloves, a gold ring, and a pipe of wine. A yeoman who was "ferre and frembde bested" (which means "far from home and in the position of a stranger") had won the match, and the unsuccessful competitors or the spectators or both, angry, no doubt, that such rich prizes should be taken out of the West Riding by a stranger, were about to slay him. The knight had ruth of him and determined to protect him "for love of Robin Hood." He and his hundred men pressed with bent bows into the place. All made them room, and the knight took the yeoman by the hand and gave him "all the play" (all the prizes). He bought the wine from him, set it abroach so that all might drink, and so tarried until all the sport was over.

The compiler of the *Gest* may well have obtained the suggestion for this episode from a ballad. The yeoman whose exploits at wrestling and danger from jealous rivals or spectators are so summarily treated here would probably have been more dwelt upon had he been the invention of the compiler of the *Gest*. The very brief and hardly sufficient account of his dangerous position in stanza 138 sounds more like a summary of a longer narrative than an original episode.

---

[1] See above, p. 33.

One hundred lines of the *Tale of Gamelyn*[1] (ll. 183-284) are occupied with an account of the hero's victory at a wrestling match. The prizes, less numerous than those of the contest in the *Gest*, are a ram and a ring (ll. 184, 186, 280, 281, 283). No one dares to dispute Gamelyn's victory, and no intervention is necessary to secure him the prizes. The two gentlemen who are in charge of the ground have to persuade Gamelyn to leave it (ll. 267-270). It is entirely possible, however, that the compiler of the *Gest* knew another narrative in which a stranger entered a wrestling contest and defeated his opponents but was attacked by the spectators and was only rescued and granted the prize through the intervention of a man of higher rank. Such a narrative might have come from a ballad, a romance, or a tale; inasmuch as the compiler of the *Gest* was operating principally with ballads, the presumption is in favour of his having drawn this episode from a ballad.

In the analysis of the principal elements of this first division of the *Gest*, the individual contribution of the compiler must not be minimized or forgotten. He was not a mere mechanical fitter-together of separate ballads, but an original poet, fusing the ballads of Robin Hood which he knew into a unified narrative which bears throughout the stamp of his individuality. There is probably not a stanza in the *Gest* which has not at least been revised by his hand, and many passages—especially those which bridge over the gap between one adventure and another and those which prepare the way for new adventures—are to be assigned entirely to him. The nature of his contributions to the ballad-material on which he worked may best be illustrated by a review of the first division of the *Gest*, with emphasis upon the work of its compiler.

The first sixteen stanzas of the *Gest* form an introduction to the entire poem, describing in a general way the character and activities of Robin Hood. Although in excellent ballad style

---

[1]Chaucer Society, Six Text Ed. of *Canterbury Tales*, II, appendix to group A. *The Tale of Gamelyn*, ed. Skeat, Oxford, 1884. Skeat, *Oxford Chaucer*, vol. IV, pp. 645-667.

This poem treats of the regular outlaw adventures in a style which approaches that of the ballad.

they are certainly the work of the compiler of the *Gest*. The opening stanza is a direct appeal like that of a minstrel to his audience:

> Lythe and listin,[1] gentilmen,
> That be of frebore blode;
> I shall you tel of a gode yeman,
> His name was Robyn Hode.

Then follow stanzas which describe Robin's courtesy,[2] his piety,[3] his love of Our Lady,[4] his respect for all women,[5] his kindness to the poor[6] and to the well disposed gentry,[7] his hostility to the clergy[8] and the officers of the law,[9] his men Little John, Scarlok and Much,[10] and his custom (a popular parallel to the similar usage of King Arthur) not to dine without some "uncouth guest" who (in Robin's case) will be able to pay well for his entertainment.[11] These fifteen stanzas put before us at the outset a carefully prepared and fairly complete picture of the outlaw Robin Hood; and by making him refuse to dine until he has some "uncouth guest" they plunge us simultaneously into the stream of the narrative of Robin and the knight. Single ballads also take up the narrative at once, but they make no attempt to give at the same time so thorough a characterization of the hero. The combination of a direct opening with characteristic description is not a ballad, but an epic construction.

This epic introduction is followed by stanzas 17-44[2], which, it has already been pointed out, are probably based upon a ballad of Robin Hood and a poor knight. No doubt they represent with some closeness the outline and words of this ballad.

The next passage (stanzas 44[3]-81) includes the alteration by the compiler of the *Gest* of the conclusion of the ballad of Robin Hood and the poor knight. Influenced, no doubt, by some form of the miracle of the Virgin in which she is offered as surety for a loan, the compiler has changed Robin's original gift to the knight into a loan on the security of Our Lady. The actual

[1]Each of the seven divisions into which the *Tale of Gamelyn* naturally falls opens with an appeal to the audience which in every case but one reads "Litheth and lesteneth," ll. 1, 169, 289, 341, 551, (615), 769.

[2]St. 2^{3-4}. [3]Sts. 8-10. [4]St. 10. [5]Ibid. [6]St. 13. [7]St. 14^{1-2}. [8]St. 15^{1-2}. [9]St. 15^{3-4} [10]Sts. 3, 4. [11]St. 5-7.

giving of the loan is briefly and directly narrated in stanzas 62-68 and 79. These are the stanzas directly suggested to the compiler by the incident in the miracle. Stanzas 44^3-61 comprise the knight's account of his distress which prompts Robin to the loan. They are evidently an elaboration by the compiler of the *Gest* of a simpler account in the ballad or miracle. For they include several passages which were clearly written with reference to and in preparation for a later part of the *Gest*. The knight says that his lands are held in pledge by the abbot of St. Mary, and that unless he can pay four hundred pounds on a certain day the abbot will seize them (st. 54). This gives the compiler of the *Gest* an opportunity to tell in fit II how the knight redeemed his lands. By making the knight a debtor to the abbot of St. Mary's Abbey, he deliberately prepares for the return of Robin's loan through his robbery of the high cellarer of the same abbey.

A smaller point shows with what care the compiler of the *Gest* has provided even for minor details of his later narrative. In stanza 49 ff, the knight says that within two years his income was four hundred pounds; but since he has pledged his lands he has no money.

49. 'Withyn this two yere, Robyne,' he sayde,
'My neghbours well it knowe,
Foure hundred pounde of gode money
Ful well than myght I spende.[1]

50. 'Nowe haue I no gode,' saide the knyght.

In stanza 92, in the second fit, the high cellarer supports the abbot in his determination to seize the knight's lands, mentioning as the inducement:

'And we shall haue to spende in this place
Foure hondred pounde by yere.'

His statement of the yearly income of the knight's lands agrees with that of the knight in fit I, stanza 49.

Stanzas 69-78, 80 and 81 present a lively little scene in

[1]This, of course, means, "I had an annual income from the lands, of four hundred pounds."

which Little John shows his pity for the knight by persuading his master to bestow various gifts upon him. Much and Scarlok at first laugh and protest humorously against Little John's generosity, but finally join him in urging the bestowal of other gifts. The knight finally rides away with cloth for garments, a courser, a palfrey, a saddle, a pair of boots, a pair of spurs, and Little John accompanying him on foot as his yeoman.[1] This elaboration of the compiler of the *Gest* was probably intended to illustrate the generosity and kindness of Robin and his men and to extend and vary the narrative by the introduction of a spirited and humorous scene. Robin's presentation of Little John to the knight to be his man is obviously a preparation for Little John's taking service with the sheriff of Nottingham in fit III (sts. 144-152). In fit III he is represented as in the knight's service when engaged by the sheriff, who arranges for the exchange with the knight (sts. 144 and 152). Thus, while engaged upon the first division of the *Gest,* the compiler has carefully provided for a transition to the second division, to which the third fit belongs.

The first two stanzas of fit II (82, 83), by telling of the knight's retrospection of his entertainment by Robin, supply a connection between the first and second fits. Stanzas 84 and 85, in which the knight tells John of his intention to go to York on the morrow and pay his debt to the abbot of St. Mary's, refer back to fit I (sts. 54, 55, 81) and forward to the adventure of fit II. All four stanzas are evidently the work of the compiler of the *Gest.*

The passage which follows (sts. 86-125) describes the redemption by the knight of the lands held by the abbot. Important discrepancies already pointed out,[2] between this passage and the first fit, make probable its suggestion by a ballad in which a man returns from over-seas, enters in poor clothes the hall of

---

[1] In a yeman's stede he may the stande,
If thou greate nedë haue. (81^{3-4}.)
Cf. the knight's yeoman in the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales:
"A yeman hadde he, and servaunts namo." (l. 101.)

[2] Pp. 42-45, above.

the man who holds his lands, is contemptuously treated, and surprises every one by laying down a bag of gold and redeeming his inheritance. If such a ballad was known to the compiler of the *Gest* and gave him a suggestion or a basis for this passage, he certainly handled it with great freedom and introduced much material of his own; for the narrative at this point has close relations to what precedes and follows, and contains much detail which was obviously composed expressly for insertion in the *Gest*. Stanzas 86, 87, for example, in which the abbot tells how a year before the knight borrowed four hundred pounds, were written with direct reference to stanzas 54, 55. The high cellarer is introduced in stanzas 91-93 as one of those favouring the seizure of the knight's lands. His appearance here is undoubtedly a preparation for the scene of his robbery in fit IV (see st. 233).

The introduction of the high justice of England (sts. 93^{3-4}, 94, and *passim*), whom the abbot had retained to assist him in gaining the lands of the knight, was probably the work of the compiler of the *Gest*. The presence among the knight's opponents of a great law-officer makes his victory yet more striking; the justice's suggestion of a compromise (sts. 117-118) and its rejection by the abbot bring out the latter's greed still more clearly; and when the knight has paid his debt, and the justice's aid in gaining the land is useless to the abbot, the man of law's refusal to restore the bribe by which he was retained in the abbot's interest adds the finishing touch to the discomfiture of that worthy (st. 123). The compiler of the *Gest* must have had these advantages in mind when he introduced the justice; and there is no reason for thinking that his figure was drawn from the ballad postulated as the suggestion of this passage.

From stanza 97 to 125 the compiler perhaps follows the outline of this hypothetical ballad rather closely, stanzas 106-107, 117-118, and 123, in which the justice is mentioned, being, as above suggested, perhaps the unaided invention of the compiler. Stanzas 126-134 are pure bridge-work. By the relation of two journeys (126^{1-2}, 134), a brief conversation between the knight and his wife (126^{3}-129), and one stanza of summary

narrative (130), he effects a transition from the knight's redemption of his land from the monk to his return nearly a year later to Barnsdale to pay his debt to Robin Hood. Stanzas 135-142 were perhaps suggested by a ballad of the rescue of a good yeoman from his jealous opponents or the spectators at a wrestling match.[1] Stanza 143 is a connective preparing for the change to the point of view of Robin Hood, in the beginning of fit IV (st. 206). The reason for the introduction, at this point, of the third fit, which introduces the reader to a new series of adventures, will be discussed when the second division of the *Gest* is considered.[2]

Fit IV opens with a stanza (205) which is a conclusion of the subject of fit III. The next two stanzas are closely connected with the end of fit II. All three stanzas (205-207) are evidently the work of the compiler of the *Gest*. Stanzas 208-232[2], 243-248[2], 255-260 probably represent a revision of a ballad in which two monks who were captured by Robin and lied about their money, were found by him to be false and consequently robbed.[3] In order to form a symmetrical contrast to the single knight of fit I, the two monks have been reduced to one by the compiler of the *Gest*.[4] Traces of the older version, in the shape of references to the two monks, have been above indicated; and it has been suggested that stanzas 255-257, which describe a second robbery of the monk, are drawn from the account, in the original ballad, of the robbery of the second monk.[5] In stanzas 232[3]-242 and 248[3]-254 the monk is identified with the high cellarer of St. Mary's Abbey (sts. 232[3]-233. Cf. 91[3]-93[2]); the knight is mentioned (sts. 237[2], 253[3]), and the robbery of the monk is represented by Robin as the return of the loan for which the knight had given Our Lady as surety (sts. 235-242, 248[3]-252). These close relations to the narrative of fits I and II make it evident that these stanzas are the work of the compiler of the *Gest*. It has been shown, however, that for the return

[1] See above, p. 47 f.
[2] See p. 56 below.
[3] See p. 17 ff, above.
[4] See p. 23 f, above.
[5] See pp. 21-23, above.

of the knight's loan by the monk he received suggestion from a well known *exemplum*.[1]

The return of the knight, his offer to pay his debt, and Robin Hood's refusal on the ground that it is paid already by his surety (sts. 261-280), all have their counterpart in the *exemplum*, and were certainly suggested by it. The passage in which they occur, however, is in close relation to the narrative of fits I and II and is undoubtedly a careful reworking of this incident by the compiler of the *Gest*. The knight has come to pay a debt contracted a year previously as described in fit I (sts. 67, 79). He makes direct reference to the attempt of the abbot and the high justice to get his land[2] (st. 266; cf. fit II, st. 86 ff), and to his delay through helping the poor yeoman, (st. 268; cf. sts. 135-143, fit II). The bows and arrows which he presents to Robin Hood (st. 275) have already been mentioned in fit II (sts. 131, 132).

In stanzas 276-280 Robin Hood presents the knight with

---

[1]See above, p. 34 ff.

[2]There is a discrepancy between this stanza (266) and the one which precedes. These stanzas read:

265. Than bespake hym Robyn Hode,
To that knyght so fre:
'What nedē dryueth the to grenē wode?
I praye the, syr knyght, tell me.

266. 'And welcome be thou, gentyll knyght,
Why hast thou be so longe?'
'For the abbot and the hyē iustyce
Wolde haue had my londe.'

Robin Hood, who has just been paid, as he holds, by the emissary of Our Lady, naturally asks the knight what brings him to the greenwood, implying, of course, that as his surety has already paid his debt, that cannot be the cause of his coming. But in the next stanza he changes the point of view and asks the knight why he has been so long, as if he were still waiting for the money to be paid. If this stood by itself it would be natural enough. Robin might easily have concealed for a time the fact that the loan had been paid and have questioned the knight as to his tardiness. But the combination of these two points of view is unnatural and inconsistent. We cannot imagine Robin saying to the knight as he does here, "What brings you here? What has kept you so long?" The first question implies surprise at his coming; the second, delayed expectation of his coming. Moreover, the reason given by the knight for his tardiness (266^{3-4}) is inconsistent with fit II. The knight was not delayed by the efforts of the abbot and the high justice to get his lands. Their efforts had been baffled and defeated almost a year

four hundred of the eight hundred pounds which he has taken from the monk (247). This princely generosity is not to be found in any form of the *exemplum* from which the composer drew the story of the return of the knight's loan. It is obviously a later addition to the original ending, and inasmuch as it served to bring out more clearly the generosity of Robin Hood already exemplified in fit I, stanzas 70-81, it was probably the original contribution of the compiler of the *Gest*.

The foregoing summary analysis of the first, second, and fourth fits of the *Gest* will, it is hoped, remove any impression that the compiler was a mere joiner together in mechanical fashion of separate Robin Hood ballads. He was a poet of real artistic skill and thoroughly popular spirit, with an intimate knowledge of the ballads of Robin Hood and of other popular ballads and tales, weaving a number of them together into an original and unified poem which to the closest study presents itself as a masterpiece of narrative construction.

---

before (See stanzas 79, 84, and 261). The knight had spent the interval quietly at home, collecting the money to pay Robin Hood, and had obtained the necessary amount in time:

130. This knight than dwelled fayre at home,
The sothe for to saye,
Tyll he had gete four hundred pound,
Al redy for to pay.

He reached Robin Hood before dark on the day appointed.

261[3-4]. Yet he came to holde his day,
Whyle that it was lyght.

His delay was caused by his rescue of the poor yeoman (sts. 135-143, cf. 268), and the abbot and high justice had nothing to do with it. The inconsistency is serious. But in this case we are not justified, I think, in attributing it to the imperfect fusion with the *Gest* of an older ballad. The direct reference to the abbot and the high justice relates st. 266 closely to that part of fit II which is the special contribution of the compiler of the *Gest*. It is probable that he was attempting here to give further unity to his narrative by connecting this passage closely with fit II. Although he generally makes such connections skilfully, he has here made a mistake.

II.

The second division of the *Gest* relates: "How Little John insidiously took service with Robin Hood's standing enemy, the sheriff of Nottingham, and put the sheriff into Robin Hood's hands, the third fit, 144-204; how the sheriff, who had sworn an oath to help and not to harm Robin Hood and his men, treacherously set upon the outlaws at a shooting match, and they were fain to take refuge in the knight's castle; how, missing of Robin Hood, the sheriff made prisoner of the knight; and how Robin Hood slew the sheriff and rescued the knight, the fifth and sixth fits, 281-353."[1]

At the beginning of the study of this division of the *Gest* a further proof of the artistic workmanship of the compiler becomes evident. The first set of adventures with the sheriff is introduced in the middle of the adventures with the knight and monk. It has been already pointed out that this introduction of new material is prepared for in the first fit. The main purpose of the compiler in making Robin Hood lend Little John to the knight to be his man (st. 81) was, without much doubt, to bring Little John within easy reach of the sheriff that he might take service with him and outwit him. An excellent transition from one set of adventures to another was thus supplied; and when Little John had fooled the sheriff to the top of his bent, the story had brought him back to Robin Hood in Barnsdale, and the arrested narrative of the knight and monk division was resumed without the slightest difficulty.

The point at which the adventures of Little John and the Sheriff are introduced will repay very close attention. Between stanzas 134-143 (which relate how the knight set out to pay Robin Hood, but was delayed through stopping to help a poor yeoman) and stanzas 206 ff (which show Robin refusing to dine

[1]Child, III, 50.

until his money is brought to him) there is no break in time.[1] They form a continuous narrative of the events of the day when the money was due. This is proved by Robin Hood's impatience at the non-arrival of the knight,[2] Little John's assurance that he will yet prove true,[3] and the knight's apology for his tardiness.[4] Between these two passages (sts. 134-143 and 206 ff) stands fit III (sts. 144-204) with st. 205, which really belongs to it. The events of fit III cannot all have occurred on the same day as the events of sts. 134-143 and 206 ff. They occupy one whole day and portions of two others. "Upon a merry day" (st. 145[1]) the shooting of Little John is admired by the sheriff, who engages him as servant for a twelvemonth, arranging matters with the knight by the present of a horse (st. 145-154). "Upon a Wednesday," when the sheriff is out hunting, Little John, who has overslept and been forgotten, demands his dinner, knocks down the butler for refusing it, fights the cook, and at last makes for the wood with the cook, who has now joined him as an outlaw, with the sheriff's money and plate (sts. 155-176[2]). Having brought his plunder to Robin Hood, he runs five miles in the forest and meets the sheriff, who is still hunting. By a successful ruse he brings him before Robin Hood, with whom the sheriff is forced to dine and spend the night (176[3]-196). Next morning the sheriff, having given oath not to harm Robin and his men, is allowed to return to Nottingham (197-205).

[1]St. 143. Thus longe taried this gentyll knyght,
Tyll that play was done;
So longe abode Robyn fastinge,
Thre hourës after the none.

206. 'Go we to dyner,' sayde Littell Johnn;
Robyn Hode sayde, Nay;
For I drede Our Lady be wroth with me,
For she sent me nat my pay.

[2]St. 206.

[3]St. 207. 'Haue no doute, maister,' sayde Litell Johnn;
'Yet is nat the sonne at rest;
For I dare say, and sauely swere,
The knight is true and truste.'

[4]St. 268. 'But take not a grefe,' sayd the knyght,
'That I haue be so longe;
I came by a wrastelynge,
And there I holpe a porë yeman,
With wronge was put behynde.'

The departure of the sheriff seems to have occurred upon the morning of the day on which the knight returned to pay his loan.[1] Little John's plundering and outwitting of the sheriff occurred on the preceding day, and he was engaged as the sheriff's servant some time before (how long is not stated). It follows, therefore, that immediately after stanza 143 the narrative not only changes in subject but turns back to a somewhat earlier period. Since stanza 84, where the knight tells Little John of his intention to pay the abbot on the morrow,[2] there has been no mention of Little John. The story of the knight's redemption of his lands (sts. 86-129), collection of the money to pay Robin (st. 130), preparations for the journey (sts. 131-134), and delay by the rescue of the yeoman (135-143), have all been related without a hint of what Little John was doing the while. Arrived at the point where the knight is delayed and Robin Hood is expecting him, the compiler turns to Little John and tells how he left the knight's service for the sheriff's, robbed and outwitted his new master, and returned to Robin Hood before the day on which the knight came to return his loan (fit III). By introducing these adventures at this point the compiler has turned back his narrative to an earlier time. To adhere to the consecutive order of events he should have introduced the account of Little John and the sheriff immediately after stanza 130.

But supposing fit III had been inserted after stanza 130 and stanzas 131-143 had been placed immediately before stanza 206 at the beginning of fit IV, would the arrangement have been as effective? With such an order, the shifts in point of view would

---

[1] 205. The sherif dwelled in Notingham;
He was fayne he was agone;
And Robyn and his mery men
Went to wode anone.

206. 'Go we to dyner,' sayde Littell Johnn;
Robyn Hode sayde, Nay;
For I drede Our Lady be wroth with me,
For she sent me nat my pay.

There seems to be no interval between the two stanzas.

[2] 84. Then spake that gentyll knyght,
To Lytel Johan gan he saye,
To-morrowe I must to Yorke toune,
To Saynt Mary abbay.

have been more numerous than at present. Up to stanza 130 the knight holds the centre of the stage. He would then have given place for a time to Little John, whose return to the woods would have led us back to Robin Hood. Then in stanzas 131-143 there would have been another shift to the point of view of the knight, and finally in stanza 205[3] we should have got back to Robin Hood once more. But in the *Gest* as the compiler made it the necessary shifting between the point of view of the knight, Little John, and Robin Hood is accomplished with greater economy and clearness. Throughout fit II the point of view is that of the knight, and his adventures are brought from the redemption of his land to a point just before his payment of Robin Hood's loan. There is a momentary shift to the point of view of Robin Hood in stanza 143[3-4]:

> So longe abode Robyn fastinge,
> Thre hourēs after the none.

Robin Hood's long expectation as described in these lines justifies the suspension of the narrative and the immediate change in stanza 144 to the adventures and point of view of Little John. Little John's adventures lead him back to the forest, where he remains at the end of fit III, and we are thus conducted easily and naturally to the point of view of Robin Hood which characterizes the opening of fit IV.

Thus the introduction, out of their proper consecutive order, of the adventures of Little John, reveals itself on analysis as an admirable artistic construction, and furnishes another striking piece of evidence of the skill of the compiler. That he does not expressly state that he has turned back to an earlier period, but leaves to his audience the not difficult task of discovering it,[1] is, as Mr. Hart points out, one of the abrupt transitions of the simple ballad style,[2] and indicates how close are the relations between the composer of the *Gest* and the poetry of the folk.

[1]Professor Brandl says: "Dass die Einschaltung [i.e., fit III] den Verlauf der ersten Rhapsodie mitten in einer Mahlzeit unterbricht, hat der Redaktor sehr oberflächlich zu vernähen gesucht" (Paul's *Grundriss*, 1st ed., II, 1, p. 843). But it has just been noted that the point at which the third fit is introduced is a time of suspense where an interruption of the narrative for the purpose of introducing a new story is quite justifiable. It has also been shown that Little John's adventures are more effective here than at any other point.

[2]*Ballad and Epic*, pp. 98, 99.

In preparation for the analysis of the third fit, its contents must again be summarized. Little John's excellent marksmanship at a shooting match having attracted the admiration of the sheriff of Nottingham, he engaged himself to the sheriff as his servant, under the name of Reynolde Grenëlefe. But he promised himself to be a bad servant to him. One Wednesday morning the sheriff went out hunting, leaving Little John in bed at home. When it was past noon Little John grew hungry and demanded his dinner of the steward. The steward would give him nothing until the sheriff returned. The butler shut the door of the buttery, but Little John gave him a tap that nearly broke his back, burst open the door of the buttery, and helped himself to food, ale, and wine (sts. 145-163[2]).

The sheriff's cook, "a stout man and a bolde," called Little John "a shrewde hynde" and struck him three good blows. Admiring his courage and hard strokes, Little John determined to assay him better. They fought with swords for a whole hour, but neither got any advantage. Seeing that it was impossible to defeat him, Little John invited the cook to join the outlaws. To this he agreed; and after they had feasted well, they broke open the sheriff's treasury, took away all his silver plate and over three hundred pounds in coin, and went together to the greenwood. Little John told Robin Hood that the sheriff had sent him his cook, his plate, and three hundred pound and three (sts. 163[3]-180).

Not content with this, Little John ran five miles in the forest, and met the sheriff hunting with hounds and horn. His day's hunt was not yet over, and he knew nothing of the theft of his plate and money. Reynolde Grenëlefe, as the sheriff still called him, told of a wonderful green hart which he had just seen, surrounded by a herd of sevenscore deer with horns of sixty tines and more. The sheriff being eager to see this fair sight, Little John offered to lead him thither, and brought him before Robin Hood and his sevenscore of wight yeomen. Robin Hood entertained the sheriff at supper, serving him from his own silver. He then forced him to spend the night in the wood, sleeping on the ground in true woodland fashion, clad only in shirt and breeches and wrapped in a green mantle. In the

morning the sheriff was so sore that he would rather have lost his head than have spent another night in the forest. Robin let him depart, exacting first an oath that he would not harm but help Robin Hood and his men (sts. 181-204).

This narrative comprises two distinct adventures, each of which might have been related independently. The first tells how Little John took service with the sheriff, fought with his servants, and stole his plate and money (sts. 145-180). The second narrates how on the pretence of showing him a fine herd of deer Little John brought the sheriff into Robin Hood's hands, and how Robin, after compelling him to swear an oath not to injure him and his men, let the sheriff go (sts. 181-204).

The first of these adventures has no parallel among the extant ballads of Robin Hood. But similar stories are related of two other English outlaw-heroes of tradition, Hereward[1] and John de Raunpaygne, a follower of Fulk fitz Warin.[2] Disguised as a potter, Hereward got admission to the Norman camp and then to the house of his chief enemy, King William. The likeness of the potter to Hereward was noted and he was brought before the king and questioned. He said that he knew Hereward, who had stolen his cow and four sheep, and by thus denouncing himself he escaped detection. In the kitchen the servants mocked and laid hands on him, but he killed one and wounded several others, and, before they could fetter him, wrested a sword from one of them and cut his way out of the

[1]On Hereward see E. A. Freeman, *The Norman Conquest* (Oxford, 1876), vol. IV, pp. 454-485, 826-833; T. F. Tout's article in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, XXVI, pp. 240-242; Thomas Wright, *Essays on the Literature, Popular Superstitions, and History of England in the Middle Ages* (London, 1846), vol. II, pp. 91-120; and Kingsley's *Hereward the Wake* (London, 1866).

[2]Fulk fitz Warin was a powerful baron of the Welsh marches who in 1201 renounced his allegiance to King John and became an outlaw, but in 1203 had his outlawry reversed and received back his estates. As an influential baron he lived on until the middle of the century, dying after 1256 (H. R. Tedder, *Fulk Fitzwarine*, in *Dictionary of National Biography*). Fulk's outlaw deeds formed the basis of an early fourteenth century Anglo-French prose romance, a paraphrase of a thirteenth century Anglo-French poem. This work, which is penetrated with fiction and tradition, evidently represents the popular tales and songs in which Fulk was celebrated (*The History of Fulk Fitz Warine*, edited with an English translation and notes by Thomas Wright. London: Warton Club, 1855. Also ed. by J. Stevenson in his ed. of Radulph de Coggeshall's *Chronicon*, Rolls Series, 1875, pp. 277-415; translated by Alice Kemble Welch, The King's Classics, London, 1907).

house.[1] The differences between this story and the first adventure of fit III are obvious. Little John hires himself to the sheriff under an assumed name; Hereward gets admission to the king's house by selling pots. No one finds in Little John any resemblance to one of Robin Hood's band, and he is not questioned as Hereward is. In the fight with the servants Little John is more the aggressor than Hereward. Unlike Hereward, Little John rifles the treasury of the sheriff. But in both narratives an outlaw under concealed identity gains admission to the house of an enemy, gets into a fight with the servants, and after killing or wounding some of them, makes his escape.

John de Raunpaygne disguised himself as a minstrel, got admission to the castle of Fulk fitz Warin's enemy, Moris de Powis, and won the favour of Moris by his playing and by his report that Fulk was dead. On account of his artificially swollen and distorted face the ribalds of the household mocked and ill-used him, until he became enraged and beat out the brains of one of them with his staff. Escaping punishment by attributing this act to temporary insanity, he got away, with information which enabled Fulk to surprise Moris de Powis next day.[2] This story differs from the first adventure of fit III in the disguise by which Fulk's man effects an entrance, in the greater provocation which the servants give him, and in the absence of a robbery at the close. In both narratives, however, the follower of a great outlaw gains admission under concealed identity to the house of an enemy, and strikes a servant who has treated him rudely. This is closer to Little John's first adventure than is the Hereward story just summarized.

The existence in the *Gesta Herwardi* and in the romance of Fulk fitz Warin of narratives so similar in outline to the first adventure of fit III is a reasonably clear indication that this adventure is not the unaided invention of the compiler of the Gest, but is derived from an earlier account of an outlaw who insidiously took service with his enemy, fought with the enemy's servants, and stole his plate and money. As to the method of its derivation, two alternatives suggest themselves. The first adventure of fit III (sts. 145-180) may be a re-working and

[1] *Gesta Herwardi*, pp. 384-388.

[2] *Fulk fitz Warin*, ed. Wright, pp. 92-95; ed. Stevenson, pp. 347, 348.

adaptation of a prose tale derived from or related to the story of Hereward or of John de Raunpaygne just summarized; or it may have been drawn from a ballad in which the exploit was attributed to one of Robin Hood's men. The latter alternative is very probably the correct one; for the simple story of an outlaw exploit of this kind is just what one would suppose to have found expression in one of the earliest ballads of the Robin Hood cycle; and the earlier part of fit III is marked to a higher degree than any other part of the *Gest* with one of the leading characteristics of the style of the simple ballads: the transitions between scene and scene are unusually abrupt. Dr. Hart, who notes this peculiarity,[1] points out that when in stanza 145 Little John says he will go shooting, the place from which he starts, his journey, and the place to which he goes are not mentioned. At the beginning of stanza 146 he is described as shooting, and in the last two lines the sheriff, whose presence has not been accounted for, is standing beside him:

145. It was vpon a mery day
That yonge men wolde go shete;
Lytell Johnn fet his bowe anone,
And sayde he wolde them mete.

146. Thre tymes Litell Johnn shet aboute,
And alwey he slet the wande;
The proudë sherif of Notingham
By the markës can stande.

Again, the change of scene between 151, when the sheriff is asking Little John to be his servant, and 155, when the sheriff has gone hunting and left Little John at home, is very abruptly made. The bargain with the knight, Little John's determination to play the sheriff an ill turn, and the statement, "Nowe is Litell John the sherifës man" (st. 153^{1}), form the only transition, and we are not told of the journey from the place of the shooting to the sheriff's house. This is contrary to the usual narrative method of the *Gest*[2] and is called by Dr. Hart "a return

[1] *Ballad and Epic*, pp. 98-99.

[2] Dr. Hart points out that in the *Gest*, change of scene is usually indicated by a brief description of a journey, e.g., sts. 20^{1-2}, 29^{1}, 98^{2}, 126, 134, 176^{3-4}, 181, 188, etc.; or by a narration in general terms of what happened in the interval, e.g., sts. 365-366, 433-434, 450; or by a combination of both these methods (st. 281). *Ballad and Epic*, p. 97 f.

for the moment to ballad methods."[1] I suggest that the presence in the early part of fit III of these abrupt transitions from scene to scene is due not so much to a return to ballad methods as to the survival at this point of several stanzas from an early ballad upon which the first adventure of fit III is founded.

Fricke points out[2] that the name of Reynolde, which, with the surname Grenëlefe, Little John gives himself when questioned by the sheriff, is repeated in stanza 293[3] as the name of one of Robin Hood's followers,[3] and suggests that in the original ballad this Reynolde and not Little John was the outlaw who took service with and robbed the sheriff, Little John having been substituted by the compiler of the *Gest*. This is a parallel hypothesis to that of the alteration of the ballad underlying fit IV from an account of the robbery of two monks to one. But in this case it is not necessary to explain the use by Little John of the name of Reynolde Grenëlefe. Little John may have adopted it just as Fulk fitz Warin when questioned by Philip Augustus called himself Amys del Bois.[4] In each instance the first name is common enough and the second has special appropriateness to the outlaw life of the man who assumes it.

Whether Fricke's theory be accepted or not, it is very probable from the point of view of subject-matter and style that the first adventure of fit III from stanza 145 to stanza 180 is based upon a ballad in which one of Robin Hood's followers took service with the sheriff, fought with his servants, and stole his plate and money.

The incident in this first division of fit III of Little John's fight with the cook, his inability to overcome him, and his proposal (immediately accepted by the cook) that the latter should join Robin Hood's band (sts. 163[3]-173) has a general agreement with several of the ballads in which Robin Hood meets with his match. Two of these ballads which are the most tradi-

---

[1] *Ballad and Epic*, p. 99.

[2] *Die Robin-Hood-Balladen*, pp. 18-19.

[3] Lytell Johan and good Scatheloke
Were archers good and fre;
Lytell Much and good Reynolde,
The worste wolde they not be. (St. 293.)

[4] *Romance of Fulk fitz Warin*, ed. Wright, p. 120, ed. Stevenson, p. 367.

tional of the group and which contain verbal parallels to the incident in fit III may now be summarized.

The ballad of *Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar* (123) exists in two versions. A, that in the Percy MS., is incomplete, almost or quite half having been torn away. B is in various seventeenth century broadsides and garlands. Professor Child says that there is no reason to suppose the story of A differed much from that of B. In the following summary, therefore, B will be used when A fails us.

The opening of the ballad—how Robin Hood, having been told by Will Scadlock that the Friar of Fountains Abbey was a better man than he, went out in search of him (B sts. 6-10), and how they carried one another across the water (A sts. 7-11, B 13-19)—does not concern us at this point. It must be noted, however, that they fight with swords from ten in the morning until four in the afternoon, and that at the end of that time Robin asks the friar for leave to blow three blasts of his horn (B sts. 23^3-25). The immediate appearance of fifty of Robin's yeomen, the friar's request for leave to whistle thrice, and the arrival of half a hundred ban-dogs to match the yeomen (A 12-17, B 27-32), have no parallel in the *Gest*. But Robin's acknowledgment of the superiority of the friar (A 18), and in particular his invitation to the friar to join his company (B 39, 40), are similar to Little John's praise of the cook and offer that he shall join Robin's men, *Gest*, 169-171^2. Neither A nor B tells us whether the friar, like the cook, accepted the invitation to become an outlaw. In the absence of a direct refusal, it is probable that he did.[1]

In *The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield* (124) Robin Hood, Scarlet, and John are stopped by a pinder for trespassing upon a corn-field. They fight the pinder one by one, Robin Hood being the last of the three, and the pinder gets the better of them all.[2]

[1] "We must infer, as in the parallel case of the Pinder of Wakefield, that the offer is accepted." Child, III, p. 121, col. 2.

[2] In the garlands and broadsides the ballad is in so abbreviated a form, and in the Percy MS. so much of it has been destroyed, that we are dependent for these details upon the play of *George a Greene, the Pinner of Wakefield* (printed 1599, reprinted in Dodsley's *Old Plays*, ed. 1825, vol. III, and Dyce, *Works of Robert Greene*), which was based upon the ballad (Child, *Eng. and Scot. Ballads*, III, 129, col. 2).

After "a long summer day" of fighting, Robin Hood calls on the pinder to hold his hand, acknowledges him one of the best pinders he ever fought, and invites him to leave his pinder's craft and come to the greenwood with him. This the pinder agrees to do at Michaelmas when his term is over.

In each of these ballads an outlaw or several outlaws fight for the best part of a day with an opponent whom he or they cannot overpower. At last the outlaw admits his defeat, praises the fighting qualities of his opponent, and invites him to join his band. This offer is either not refused or plainly accepted. Little John also fights for a considerable time (one hour) with an opponent who is too strong for him to defeat. He praises his opponent's fighting qualities and invites him to join the outlaw band. The invitation is accepted. Besides these general agreements with the two ballads, the words in which the invitation is couched are similar in all three cases. These and the other more striking agreements are exhibited by the parallel arrangement of the accompanying note.[1]

---

[1] *Lytell Geste*, 111, 167-171.

Lytell Johnn drew a ful gode sworde,
The coke toke another in hande;
They thought no thynge for to fle,
But stifly for to stande.

There they fought sore togedere
Two mylë way and well more;
Myght neyther other harme done,
The mountnaunce of an owre.

'I make myn auowe to God,' sayde Litell Johan,
'And by my true lewtë,
Thou art one of the best swordemen
That euer yet sawe I me.

'Cowdest thou shote as well in a bowe,
To grenë wode thou shuldest with me,
And two times in the yere thy clothinge
Chaunged shuldë be;

'And euery yere of Robyn Hode
Twenty merke to thy fe:'
'Put vp thy swerde,' saide the coke,
'And felowës woll we be.'

Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar, B.

They took their swords and steel bucklers,
And fought with might and maine;
23^{3-4}

From ten oth' clock that day,
Till four ith' afternoon.
24^{1-2}

'If thou wilt forsake fair Fountains Dale,
And Fountains Abby free,
Every Sunday throughout the year,
A noble shall be thy fee.

'And every holy day throughout the yeir,
Changed shall thy garment be,
If thou wilt go to fair Nottingham,
And there remain with me.'
39, 40

Jolly Pinder of Wakefield, A.

6. He leaned his back fast unto a thorn,
And his foot unto a stone,
And there he fought a long summer's day,
A summer's day so long,
Till that their swords, on their broad bucklers,
Were broken fast unto their hands.

7. 'Hold thy hand, hold thy hand,' said Robin Hood,
'And my merry men euery one;
For this is one of the best pinders
That ever I try'd with sword.

8. 'And wilt thou forsake thy pinder his craft,
And live in the green wood with me?
. . . . . .
12^{1-4}. 'Thou shalt have a livery twice in the year,
The one green, the other brown shall be.'

9. 'At Michaelmas next my covnant comes out,
When every man gathers his fee;
I'le take my blew blade all in my hand,
And plod to the green wood with thee.'

The fact that the ballads of *Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar* (123) and *The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield* (124) are recorded in documents much later than the editions of the *Gest* is no indication that the parallel passages in these ballads are echoes or direct borrowings from the *Gest*. It is an accepted principle of the study of popular literature that a ballad or folk-tale may be centuries older than the copy in which it has been preserved. Professor Child says that *Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar* in both versions is in a genuinely popular strain, and was made to sing, not to print.[1] Of *The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield* he says: "This ballad is thoroughly lyrical, and therein 'like the old age,' and was pretty well sung to pieces before it ever was printed."[2] Two ballads which to Professor Child's unerring instinct impressed themselves as genuinely lyrical and popular are evidently far older than their extant sixteenth century copies. There is no reason to doubt that in substantially the same form they may have existed before the compilation of the *Gest*, even if this compilation was completed before 1400.

That ballads in which Robin Hood met with his match might have existed before the compilation of the *Gest* is indicated by the fact that the theme occurs among the traditions of Hereward.[3] Since long before the ballads of Robin Hood a great English outlaw was said to have met his match, there is no need to suppose that the story was late in attaching itself to Robin Hood. Moreover, the opening incident of the ballad of *Robin Hood and the Potter* (121) is an account of how Robin fought with a potter and met his match, which in spite of its connection with what follows is a distinct adventure in itself and may well have been derived from a separate ballad. The date of the manuscript in which *Robin Hood and the Potter* is preserved is approximately the same as that of the earliest extant editions of the *Gest*—about 1500. The language and style fur-

[1] *Ballads*, III, 121, col. 2.

[2] Ibid. III, 129, col. 1.

[3] See above, p. 61, note 1. Hereward was insulted by a Saxon knight named Letold, and after a stubborn fight in which Hereward lost one of his swords and Letold was wounded in the leg, Hereward, who could not bring him to yield, admitted him the best fighter he had ever met. *Gesta Herwardi*, pp. 398-399.

nish no conclusive reason for believing that *Robin Hood and the Potter* is not as old as or older than the *Gest*. These probabilities, with the existence in the Hereward tradition of a similar theme, render more likely the natural supposition that ballads which related how Robin Hood met his match were sung and recited before the compilation of the *Gest*.

The resemblances between the fight with the cook in fit III (sts. 163^{3}-173) and the two ballads (*Curtal Friar* and *Pinder*) might conceivably have been due to borrowing in one direction or the other. They are better explained, however, by the supposition that in the early ballads just postulated, in which Robin Hood met his match, the fight with swords for an extended period, the outlaw's acknowledgment that he had never fought with so good a swordsman, his offer of livery and fee if his opponent will join his band, and the other's immediate acceptance, were stock features, occurring not in every instance but very frequently; that one or more of the ballads containing these features suggested the fight with the cook in fit III; and that two ballads containing these features, which may have been but were not necessarily the same ballads that suggested the fight with the cook, were preserved and doubtless modified by oral tradition until they were recorded in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, and have reached us through seventeenth century manuscripts and broadsides as the ballads of *Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar* and *The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield*.

The account of the fight with the cook (fit III, sts. 163^{3}-173) is an episode complete in itself and readily separable from the surrounding narrative. There is no reference to it in what precedes; and the substitution of *he* and *him* for *they* and *them* in stanzas 174-176, with the omission of stanza 178^{1-2} and the words *his coke* in 179^{3}, would render it absolutely independent of what follows. The ease with which it may thus be detached from the rest of the adventure is a further reason for thinking it an insertion suggested by one or more of the ballads of Robin Hood meeting his match. Probably the ballad which we have postulated as underlying the first adventure of the third fit was originally a comparatively simple account, like the stories of

Hereward and John de Raunpaygne, how one of Robin's men took service with the sheriff, beat and knocked down the servants when they refused him dinner, stole the sheriff's money, and carried it to the greenwood as a present from the sheriff to Robin Hood. Then, at the suggestion of a ballad or ballads of Robin Hood meeting his match, some one, either a minstrel or reciter, or the compiler of the *Gest,* conceived the idea of expanding this simple ballad by making one of the servants resist Robin's man and, like the opponent of the outlaw in the ballads, hold him in check, force him to an offer of friendship, and finally accept his invitation to join the outlaws in the forest.

The fact that of all the sheriff's servants a cook was selected as the outlaw's successful opponent may be due simply to the fact that heroic cooks were not uncommon in mediaeval narrative. Professor Gummere instances Rumolt in the Niebelungen.[1] It is possible, however, that such a cook already existed in the Robin Hood cycle, either as the successful opponent in the ballad which suggested the episode under consideration or as a follower of Robin Hood. In the list of Hereward's followers in the *Gesta Herwardi*[2] is mentioned one Utlag, *cocus Herwardi.*[3] There is good evidence that this cook, like some of the other characters in this list, was the hero of many daring exploits.[4] As Hereward had a cook worth mentioning, Robin Hood may have had one too. The person who inserted the fight with the cook into the first adventure of fit III of the *Gest* may have received his suggestion from a ballad in which Robin or one of his men fought with this cook and afterward persuaded him to join the outlaws; or the cook may have been known to him simply as one of Robin Hood's men, as Scarlet and Much are

[1] *Old English Ballads* (Boston, 1894), p. 317.

[2] *Gesta Herwardi,* in Hardy and Martin's edition of Gaimar, *Lestorie des Engles* (London, 1888), vol I, pp. 372-373.

[3] "Cum quibus nec non et alii in militia probatissimi adhuc computati Utlamhe, id est Exhulis, cocus Herwardi." *Op. cit.,* I, 373.

[4] The cook appears on p. 402 of the same work, when he with another of Hereward's followers, gets access to his master while he is in prison.
"Cum illo (Lefric) quidem quodam tempore illuc Utlac cocus ejusdem perrexit, vir equidem in omni loco cautus, et inter externos facetiosus." Both *Utlamhe* and *Utlac* are incorrect forms of *Utlag* (*op. cit.,* I, liii).

known to us, and he may have determined to use the opportunity for a fight with a cook which the situation offered him, to explain how this cook became a member of the band; just as Little John as Robin Hood's lieutenant probably antedates any form of the ballad of *Robin Hood and Little John*[1] (125). However the cook as an opponent of the outlaw was introduced, it was very easy to complete the new episode and to connect it with what followed. The cook's participation in the robbery could have been indicated by the change of a few pronouns, and his arrival before Robin Hood by the addition of a few lines.

The second adventure of fit III—how on the pretence of showing him a fine herd of deer Little John led the sheriff into Robin Hood's power, and how Robin Hood, after making the sheriff swear not to harm him or his men, let him go—is well connected with the preceding adventure. Little John meets the sheriff "huntynge with houndes and horne" (st. 182^2). This falls in exactly with the statement in the account of Little John's first adventure that "the sherif on huntynge was gone" (st. 155^2). In accordance with the account of the hiring of Little John as the sheriff's servant at the beginning of fit III (sts. 148-153), Little John calls the sheriff "my deere mayster," and the sheriff calls him "Reynolde Grenëlefe" (sts. 183, 186^1, 187^3, 189^3, 190^2). Little John mentions the fact that he was misserved of his dinner (st. $190^{3\text{-}4}$, cf. 156, 158), and the plate stolen from the sheriff by Little John (st. 175) is used to serve the sheriff at supper (st. 191).

But in spite of these numerous connections, the two adventures are not organically related; the second does not grow out of the first; it has been juxtaposed to it. Stanza 181 has the effect of a transition from one story to another. After he had returned to the greenwood with his booty:

181. Lytyll Johnn there hym bethought
Or a shrewde wyle;
Fyue myle in the forest he ran,
Hym happed all his wyll.

182. Than he met the proudë sheref

[1]This ballad tells how Little John defeated Robin Hood and afterwards joined his band, changing his name from John Little to Little John.

The adventure which follows refers to the first only in the details already enumerated, has no connection with it in essential incidents, and gives every indication of having been derived from an independent ballad.

A similar adventure constitutes the main incident of two extant ballads of Robin Hood. The first we shall consider, *Robin Hood and the Potter* (121), begins with an account of Robin's fight with a potter which (as pointed out above, p. 67 f.) is probably a separate incident derived from one of the early ballads of Robin Hood meeting his match. The main part of the ballad relates how Robin Hood changed clothes with the potter, sold his pots in Nottingham, presented five of them to the sheriff's wife and thus obtained an invitation to dine with her and the sheriff, entered a shooting match and won the sheriff's praise, said he had often shot with Robin Hood, and offered to lead the sheriff to him. The sheriff rode, and the supposed potter drove, into the forest. Robin blew his horn and his men came up. He took the sheriff's horse and other gear, but sent him home with a white palfrey as a present for his wife.

The culminating incident of this ballad has a general resemblance to the final adventure of fit III. In each, an outlaw under concealed identity craftily persuades a sheriff to follow him into the wood and leads him into the power of a band of outlaws, whence he is released unharmed. But the various incidents in *Robin Hood and the Potter* that lead up to this exploit—for example, the pot-selling, the present to the sheriff's wife, and the shooting—have no parallel in the final adventure of fit III. The ruse by which the sheriff is induced to follow the outlaw differs completely from that in fit III, and the sheriff is not compelled to swear that he will keep peace with the outlaws.

Aside from the incidents that lead up to it, the culminating incident of *Robin Hood and the Potter* is closely paralleled in the *Roman d'Eustache*. Eustace the Monk, dressed in peasant garb, entered the hall of the Count of Boulogne and said he was a merchant whom Eustace had robbed in the forest and forced to put on peasant's clothes. He told the count that Eustace was not far away and besought him for vengeance. The count bade

the supposed merchant lead him to the outlaw, and, taking six men, followed Eustace into the forest. Eustace led him into a band of twenty-nine of his outlaw followers. Having the count in his power, he dismissed him unharmed without exacting any oath or promise.[1]

The agreement in essentials between this story and the incident in *Robin Hood and the Potter* is remarkably close. It does not establish the existence of a direct relationship between the traditions of Eustace and *Robin Hood and the Potter,* but it makes it very probable that the final incident of that ballad is based upon a simple ballad similar in outline to the above exploit of Eustace.

It is clear that Little John's second adventure in fit III differs in so many important points from the concluding incident in *Robin Hood and the Potter,* and from the Eustace story which represents its earlier form, that John's adventure can hardly have been based on either of the others. That the composer of fit III freely adapted the incident from *Robin Hood and the Potter* or from a simpler version is a possible supposition, but not to be adopted if a closer parallel exists.

Robin Hood and the Butcher (122) is extant in two versions. Version A, in the Percy Manuscript, has three considerable gaps, but the substance of the lost passages may be inferred from version B. After a fight with a butcher in which the butcher was probably victorious,[2] Robin certainly bought his cart of meat and drove to Nottingham. Here he took lodging with the sheriff, whose wife made him welcome (A sts. 10, 11). He sold his meat at the market and went to dine with the sheriff (A sts. 13-17). At the dinner, Robin called for wine and offered to pay the shot. The sheriff, thinking him a prodigal who wished to spend all his possessions, asked him if he had any horned beasts to sell. Robin Hood replied that he had two or three hundred, and would sell them to the sheriff (B sts. 17-21). Next day Robin Hood led the sheriff into the forest. Pointing

[1] *Roman d'Eustache,* ll. 775-851.

[2] This fight does not occur in version B, where there is no quarrel and where Robin simply questions the butcher and then buys his mare, cart, and meat.

to the harts and hinds which were there in abundance, Robin told the sheriff that they were his horned beasts. The sheriff would have been glad to be away, but Robin blew his horn and his men came up (A sts. 20-25). Robin took from the sheriff all the money he had brought to buy the horned beasts, and sent him home with good wishes to his wife (B 29, 30; A 26-31).

This ballad is evidently what Professor Child calls it, a variation of *Robin Hood and the Potter;*[1] and Fricke is probably right in saying that it is either dependent upon the latter ballad or drawn from a common original.[2] Each ballad tells how Robin Hood procured the outfit and wares of a tradesman and sold these wares in Nottingham; how he made friends with the sheriff's wife, dined with the sheriff, enticed him into his power in the forest, robbed him, and sent him home with a greeting to his wife. The differences of detail are appropriate to the different trade assumed by Robin Hood in each case. In regard to the ruse by which the sheriff is induced to follow Robin to the wood, the variation brings the ballad of *Robin Hood and the Butcher* closer to the *Gest* than is *Robin Hood and the Potter.* Instead of offering to help the sheriff to capture Robin Hood, Robin proposes to sell him a large herd of cattle. Having conducted him into the wood to see them, he shows the sheriff the deer and says that they are his cattle. After stating in this way the fact that he is an outlaw, Robin blows his horn and calls his men. Comparing this ruse with that of Little John in the *Gest,* we note that in *Robin Hood and the Butcher* an outlaw induces a sheriff to follow him into the wood by offering to show him a large herd of deer. In the first case the cattle turn out to be deer, the cattle of the outlaws; in the second the deer turn out to be outlaws. It is entirely possible, therefore, that Little John's second trick upon the sheriff in fit III (sts. 181-204) was suggested by an earlier version of the ballad of *Robin Hood and the Butcher.* But there is no parallel in *Robin Hood and the*

[1] Child, *English and Scottish Ballads,* III, 115, col. 2.

[2] "Wörtliche Ubereinstimmungen der besprochenen Ballade mit 'Robin Hood and the Potter' finden sich nur wenig; dennoch ist sie entweder von dieser älteren Ballade abhängig oder beide haben ein gemeinschaftliches Vorbild benutzt." Fricke, *Die Robin-Hood-Balladen,* p. 17.

Butcher to the oath which the sheriff is compelled to swear in the *Gest*, and this deficiency, with the slight difference in the ruse employed to entrap the sheriff, renders *Robin Hood and the Butcher* not wholly satisfactory as a source for the incident in the *Gest*.

Among the extant ballads of Robin Hood, no other incident occurs which is at all related to the second adventure of fit III. But among the recorded traditions of another outlaw, Fulk fitz Warin, there is a story which corresponds to it in every important particular. One day when King John was hunting in the forest, he came upon Fulk fitz Warin disguised as a charcoal burner, and asked him if he had seen a stag or hind. Fulk replied that he had seen a stag with long horns and offered to lead the king to it. King John followed him into the forest. On the pretext of intending to drive the stag towards him, Fulk left the king and summoned his men, who were ambushed in the thicket near by. They rose up and took the king prisoner. After King John had pledged his faith to restore Fulk and his companions to land and favour he was allowed to go.[1]

---

[1] *Fulk fitz Warin*, ed. Wright, pp. 146-148; ed. Stevenson, pp. 387-389. Summarized by Child, vol. III, p. 53. Cf. especially the following passages:

"Daun vyleyn," fet le roy, "avez veu nul cerf ou bisse passer par ycy?" "Oyl, mon seignour, pieça." "Quele beste veitez-vus?" "Sire, mon seignur, une cornuée; si avoit longe corns." "Où est-ele?" "Sire, mon seignur, je vus say molt bien mener là où je la vy." "Ore avant, daun vyleyn! e nus vus siweroms." *Fulk fitz Warin*, p. 146, ed. Wright; p. 387, ed. Stevenson.

'Yonder I sawe a ryght fayre harte,
His coloure is of grene;
Seuen score of dere vpon a herde
Be with hym all bydene.

'Their tyndës are so sharpe, maister,
Of sexty, and well mo,
That I durst not shote for drede,
Lest they wolde me slo.'

'I make myn auowe to God,' sayde the shyref,
That syght wolde I fayne se:'
'Buske you thyderwarde, mi derë mayster,
Anone, and wende with me.'

Gest, sts. 185-187.

Le roy ly cria mercy, e ly pria pur amour Dieu la vie, e yl ly rendreyt enterement tou son heritage e quanquil aveit tolet de ly e de tous les suens, e ly grantereit amour e pees pur tous jours; e a ce ly freit en totes choses

In its essentials this story is identical with that of the second adventure of fit III. In each case an outlaw under concealed identity meets with his arch-enemy in the forest, offers to show him a fine stag, and leads him into the power of a band of outlaws. In each case the captive is released after swearing or pledging his faith to a truce. Since this is the only known story that agrees in all these essential points with the adventure in the *Gest*, it is a reasonable assumption that the adventure in the *Gest* is derived either from this story of Fulk fitz Warin or from an essentially identical story in the common fund of outlaw tradition. In either case it probably existed as a separate ballad of Robin Hood before it was incorporated with the third fit of the *Gest*. A simple narrative of an exploit like that of Fulk fitz Warin is liable to have become attached to Robin Hood long before any one thought of compiling a *Gest* of his adventures; and since, from our earliest notices of Robin Hood in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, he is referred to as pre-eminently a hero of ballads, it is a natural supposition that a characteristic adventure of this kind would, as soon as it was attached to Robin Hood, take the form of a ballad. For these reasons it is probable that Little John's second deception of the sheriff in fit III (sts. 181-204), is based upon a simple ballad in which Robin Hood

---

tiele seurete come yl meysmes voleit devyser. Fouke ly granta bien tote sa demande a tieles quil ly donast, veantz ces chevalers, la foy de tenyr cest covenant. Le roy ly plevy sa fey quil ly tendroit covenant, e fust molt lee que issi poeit eschaper. *Fulk fitz Warin*, ed. Stevenson, pp. 388-389.

'Lat me go,' than sayde the sherif,
'For sayntë charitë,
And I woll be the bestë frende
That euer yet had ye.'

'Thou shalt swere me an othe,' sayde Robyn,
'On my bright bronde;
Shalt thou neuer awayte me scathe,
By water ne by lande.

'And if thou fynde any of my men,
By nyght or by day,
Vpon thyn othë thou shalt swere
To helpe them that thou may.'

Now hath the sherif sworne his othe,
And home he began to gone.

Gest, sts. 201-204.

or one of his men played a similar trick upon the sheriff, exacted a similar oath from him, and let him go in a similar way.

To summarize the results of the foregoing analysis of fit III, the first adventure (sts. 145-180) is probably based upon a ballad in which one of Robin Hood's followers took service with the sheriff of Nottingham, beat his servants, and stole his plate and money. The episode of Little John's fight with the cook (sts. 163^3-173) is probably an expansion of this first adventure, suggested by a ballad relating how Robin Hood met his match. The second adventure of fit III (sts. 181-204) is probably based upon a ballad in which Robin Hood or one of his men, on the pretence of showing the sheriff a fine herd of deer, led him into the power of the outlaws. The fusion of these elements into the narrative of the third fit may have been the work of the compiler of the *Gest;* or it may have been accomplished by one or more of the earlier minstrels or reciters, and the compiler's task may have been simply to incorporate the ballad thus formed with the rest of his material. There is something to be said in favour of the latter alternative. The ballads of *Robin Hood and the Potter* (121) and *Adam Bell* (116) are very probable examples of the union of two ballads in one. The accretive tendency evidently did not begin with the *Gest,* and it might be well to assume that the ballads which make up fit III passed through a simple stage of this tendency before they were embodied in the longer narrative. It is, however, equally possible that they were combined by the compiler.

Three stanzas in the early part of fit III connect Little John's adventures with what precedes. The opening stanza reads:

144. Lyth and lystyn, gentilmen
All that nowe be here;
Of Litell Johann, that was the knightēs man,
Goode myrth ye shall here.

Before the sheriff gets Little John for his man he has to make arrangements with the knight (sts. 151, 152). These three stanzas refer directly to stanza 81 in the first fit and are undoubtedly the work of the compiler of the *Gest.* If he was in this fit

incorporating with his narrative a ballad of one of Robin's men taking service with the sheriff, it was necessary to explain how Little John left the service of the knight. This was accomplished without difficulty by the insertion of these three stanzas.

At the end of the third fit, Little John is in the wood with Robin, and the transition to the monk episode (fit IV) is easy. Moreover, the oath sworn by the sheriff at the end of this fit (sts. 202-204[1]) connects it closely with fit V, in which the sheriff breaks this oath (sts. 287^{3-4}, 296, 297).[1] The oath, however,

[1]It is rather surprising that Professor Brandl (*op. cit.*, p. 843) should connect fit III with the narrative of fits VII and VIII rather than with that of fits V and VI. He divides the *Gest* (exclusive of the account of Robin Hood's death) into three "rhapsodies." The first, comprising fits I, II, and IV, is identical with the first of the three divisions made by Child; but in the second rhapsody he puts only V and VI, grouping III, VII, and VIII to 450 as the third. He admits that fit III has a direct bearing on fits V and VI, although his statement of their relations is a curious one. The compiler, he believes, wished to unite to the first rhapsody a second (V, VI), in which Robin Hood and his men were pursued by the sheriff and rescued by a knight, and afterwards rescued the knight from the sheriff and killed the latter. But this violent deed being in absolute contrast to the character of the benevolent robber of the first rhapsody, the compiler of the Gest was compelled to insert in that rhapsody an account of the sheriff's capture and oath not to harm the outlaws, to explain Robin's slaughter of the sheriff. ("Weil diese Gewaltthat dem Character des wohlthätigen Räubers in der ersten Rhapsodie gründlich widersprach, war vorhin (als III. Gesang) eingeschaltet worden, wie der Friedensrichter durch Little John, den Vertrauten Robin Hoods, in den Wald und die Gefangenschaft gelockt, gegen das Versprechen der Urfehde aber freigelassen wurde: den Wortbrüchigen mag das Schwert treffen!") Professor Brandl is right in considering fit III necessary as an explanation of Robin Hood's anger with the sheriff and his slaying of him. But surely he is not right in saying that this violent deed is in absolute contrast to the character of the benevolent robber of the first rhapsody. It merely represents a side of his character which has not a chance to show itself in the first rhapsody.

In spite of the fact that fit III was inserted in preparation for fits V and VI, Professor Brandl believes that it was originally connected with the story of the king's visit to Robin Hood. The reasons he gives are expressed as follows: "Gehört hat sie (fit III) ursprünglich zu einer dritten Rhapsodie. (*Gest*, VII, VIII, bis Str. 450.) . . . . .Das freundliche Verhältnis des wirklichen Königs zum Waldkönig ist nämlich in der obigen Einschaltung (i.e., fit III). Punkt für Punkt vorbereitet durch das unfreundliche Verhältnis in welches Little John als Diener des Friedensrichters zu diesem schlechten Beamten des Königs gedrängt wird; selbst dass Robin Hood seinen Herrn in die grüne Räuberuniform kleidet, hat dort schon seine charakteristisch gewendete Parallele." That such a relation was present to the mind of the compiler of the *Gest* is far from evident. The resemblances between the account of Robin's entertainment of the sheriff (191-204), and of the king (VII, VIII) are of the most general character. Every guest of Robin was entertained at dinner. As for the suggestion that

was in all probability a feature of the ballad source of fit III.[1] It probably was not an invention of the compiler of the *Gest,* but was taken advantage of by him as a convenient point by which to connect fit V with the earlier narrative.

The fifth fit relates how the sheriff of Nottingham summoned all the best archers of the north to a shooting match and offered as the prize a golden-tipped, silver-shafted arrow. Robin Hood said he would see that shooting and try the sheriff's faith. Seven score of Robin's wight young men followed him to Nottingham, where many bold archers were shooting. Robin allowed but six of his men to shoot with him, bidding the rest to guard him from treachery. Robin Hood, Little John, Scathelok, Much, Good Reynolde, and Gilbert with the White Hand shot in turn. All shot well, but Robin Hood was "evermore the best" (sts. 282-294). The prize had been given him and he was starting for the greenwood, but the sheriff had recognized Robin Hood (st. 291), and attacked him and his men. Robin fiercely denounced his treachery. He and his men drew their bows and shot such a cloud of arrows that the sheriff's men gave way. A retreat to the greenwood was thus opened up. Robin and his men retired, exchanging many an arrow with the sheriff's men. During this running fight Little John was badly wounded, but Much carried him on his shoulder for a mile (sts. 295-308). A little within the wood was a castle, where dwelt the knight to whom Robin had lent the money. The knight took in Robin Hood and all his company and shut the gates against the sheriff of Nottingham. He swore that Robin should spend forty days with him, and made him and his men sit down to meat (sts. 309-316).

---

the dressing of the king's men in green cloth (sts. 418 ff) and the giving to the sheriff of a green mantle in which to sleep in the wood (194) are conscious parallels, it is entirely possible, but even if correct proves only that the compiler of the *Gest* was thinking of fit III when he wrote fit V. (See p. 120, below.) In short the connection between fit III and fits VII and VIII is remote and based only on fancied parallels. That between fit III and fits V and VI is obvious. For these reasons, Child's division of the *Gest* and not Brandl's has been followed in the present study.

[1]The captured king in *Fulk fitz Warin* swears to restore Fulk to land and favour. See above, pp. 74, 75.

Several passages in fit V may be assigned without hesitation to the authorship of the compiler of the *Gest*. Stanza 281[1] furnishes a transition from the return of the knight's loan to the outlaws' visit to Nottingham by relating the knight's departure and by indicating in very general terms the occupation of Robin Hood and his men during the interval.[2] In stanza 287 Robin says that by going to Nottingham he will know whether the sheriff is true or not.[3] This is a direct reference to the sheriff's oath not to harm Robin or his men in fit III, stanzas 202-204. The reference is explicit in stanzas 297-298. Robin indignantly reminds the sheriff of the oath which he swore to him in the forest and says that if he had him there again he would make him give a better pledge than his faith.[4] In stanza 310,[5] the knight, who shelters Robin Hood and his men, is identified with the knight to whom Robin lent his money in the first division; and in stanza 312 the knight himself thanks Robin for his help and kindness upon that occasion.[6]

---

[1]Now hath the knyght his leue i-take,
And wente hym on his way;
Robyn Hode and his mery men
Dwelled styll full many a day.

[2]Hart, *Ballad and Epic*, p. 97.

[3]'Buske you, my mery yonge men,
Ye shall go with me;
And I wyll wete the shryuës fayth,
Trewe and yf he be.'

[4]'And wo be thou! thou proudë sheryf,
Thus gladdynge thy gest;
Other wyse thou behotë me
In yonder wylde forest.

'But had I the in grenë wode,
Under my trystell-tre,
Thou sholdest leue me a better wedde
Than thy trewe lewtë.'

[5]And there dwelled that gentyll knyght,
Syr Rychard at the Lee,
That Robyn had lent his good,
Under the grenë-wode tree.

[6]'And moche I thanke the of thy confort,
And of thy curteysye,
And of thy gretë kyndënesse,
Under the grenë-wode tre.

All the stanzas just enumerated refer to earlier passages in the *Gest* and are evidently the work of the compiler. Moreover, the concluding episode of fit V, to which belong the last two stanzas mentioned, 310 and 312, is in close relation to the narrative in the first division, of Robin Hood's kindness to the knight. At the conclusion of the fourth fit the knight is under the deepest obligations to Robin Hood, who has enabled him to redeem his lands, refused to accept payment of his loan, and presented him outright with four hundred pounds (st. 277). In the final episode of the fifth fit (sts. 309-316) he fully acknowledges these obligations (st. 312), and by receiving Robin Hood and his men into his castle and protecting them from the sheriff of Nottingham he puts his gratitude into unmistakable form. The whole episode connects the first division of the *Gest* with the second by relating how the knight repaid Robin Hood for his great services in fits I and IV. It produces the effect of having been composed for this very purpose, and may therefore be tentatively grouped with stanzas 281, 287, 297, and 298 as the work of the compiler of the *Gest*.

The deduction from fit V of these four stanzas and of stanzas 309-316 leaves it a simple ballad telling how Robin Hood and his men went to a shooting match at Nottingham; how Robin won the prize; how the sheriff and his men attacked the outlaws; and how amid a sharp exchange of arrows, in which Little John was wounded, Robin and his men fought their way to the greenwood. Barring the absence of a concluding stanza,[1] the deduction of the above portions of fit V leaves it an independent ballad, coherent and complete in itself. It may well represent such a simple ballad which has been incorporated, with little change, into the *Gest*, and connected with the main narrative by the insertion of references to the sheriff's oath (sts. 287,

[1]Stanza 308:

Up he toke hym on hys backe,
And bare hym well a myle;
Many a tyme he layd hym downe,
And shot another whyle,

is not a suitable ending for such a ballad. But one additional stanza might easily have completed it.

297, 298), and by the alteration of the ending by the introduction of the episode of the knight's castle (sts. 309-316).

No story is more likely to have been told by one or more of the earliest Robin Hood ballads than a story of this kind. Its two chief themes—archery, and pursuit by the sheriff—represent two of the most characteristic interests of outlaw life. Their union in a simple but stirring narrative may well have been drawn from an actual outlaw adventure. Shooting contests were frequent, outlaws were bold and were good archers, and between them and the sheriffs there was bitter enmity. Given these conditions, such an adventure as that of fit V was inevitable; and given an outlaw, Robin Hood, a hero of ballads, its attachment to the cycle as a ballad seems also to have been inevitable.

The nearest parallel among the extant Robin Hood ballads to the story told in the fifth fit of the *Gest* is *Robin Hood and the Golden Arrow* (152). But as the first twenty-three stanzas are based upon the *Gest* (282-295), it is valueless as evidence that fit III of the *Gest* is derived from a ballad. Moreover, the ending of the story is different. The outlaws, who are disguised, get away undetected, and afterwards shoot an arrow into the town with a letter for the sheriff informing him that it is Robin Hood who has won the prize.

Among other English outlaw stories no instance has been found of the competing of a band of outlaws in a shooting match and their escape when attacked by the officers of the law. Two parallels in these traditions to an incident of fit V may, however, be pointed out. When Little John is wounded in the knee and cannot walk, he begs Robin Hood to cut off his head lest he fall alive into the hands of the sheriff. Robin refuses and Much carries John on his back (sts. 302-308). William fitz Warin, severely wounded in a fight with the king's men, makes the same request of his comrades. They refuse, and William, unlike Little John, is made prisoner.[1] Wallace also, another outlaw

[1] *Fulk fitz Warin*, ed. Wright, pp. 153-157; ed. Stevenson, pp. 392-393. Cf. especially the following passages:

"E William lur prie qu'il coupent sa teste e la emportent ou eux, issi

hero,[1] actually cuts off the head of a follower rather than let

---

que le roy, quant trovee son cors, ne sache qui yl fust. Fouke dit qe ce ne freit pur le monde" (p. 153).

Lytell Johan was hurte full sore,
With an arowe in his kne,
That he myght neythor go nor ryde;
It was full grete pytë.

'Mayster,' then sayd Lytell Johan,
'If euer thou louedst me,
And for that ylkë lordës loue
That dyed vpon a tre,

'And for the medes of my seruyce,
That I haue serued the,
Lete neuer the proudë sheryf
Alyue now fyndë me.

'But take out thy brownë swerde,
And smyte all of my hede,
And gyue me woundës depe and wyde;
No lyfe on me be lefte.'

'I wolde not that,' sayd Robyn,
'Johan, that thou were slawe,
For all the golde in mery Englonde,
Though it lay now on a rawe.'

Gest, sts. 302-306.

[1]The main sources of Wallace's authentic history are: Wyntoun, *Cronykill of Scotland*, ed. Macpherson, 1795, vol. II, book VIII, ch. xiii, xv, xviii, xx; Bower, Continuation of Fordun's *Scotichronicon*, ed. Fleming, 1759, book XI, ch. 28-31, 34; XII, 3, 4, 8; Major, *Historia Majoris Britaniae*, ed. 1521, fol. lxx-lxxiiii; Walter of Hemingburgh, *Chronicon*, ed. Hamilton, 1849, vol. II, p. 128 ff. See also the lives by Carrick (London, 1840), Murison (Edinburgh, 1898), Mackay (*Dict. Nat. Biag.*), and Moir (*Wallace* in Scottish Text Society, pp. xxv-xlviii). The popular traditions about him have been in part preserved in a poetical biography of eleven books entitled "the Actis and Deidis of the illustere and vaiȝeand campioun Schir William Wallace" of unknown authorship, though usually attributed to one "Blind Harry" (ed. James Moir, Scottish Text Society, Edinburgh, 1889). This work, composed one hundred and fifty years or more after the death of Wallace, is so full of legendary and traditional material that in many cases fact cannot be separated from fiction. The Wallace of tradition, here represented, is, especially in his earlier and later adventures, an outlaw as well as a patriot. Whatever the relation of his traditions to those of Robin Hood, which may have arisen later or earlier, he is in some respects a similar figure and was probably a hero of ballads (Cf. *Gude Wallace*, Child, 157, which is derived from the poem just mentioned, but which, as Professor Child says, may be not unlike the earlier ballads from which the *Wallace* ["Blind Harry's"] was probably in part composed).

him fall into the hands of the enemy.[1] On another occasion Wallace rescues a follower, Crawford, who is wounded, by carrying him away on his back.[2]

The absence from extant ballads and outlaw traditions of a close parallel to the whole incident in fit V does not seriously weaken the probability of its derivation from a ballad of Robin Hood. The story in fit V is so independent and complete, so close to the ballad in style, and so characteristic an outlaw adventure that, in spite of the lack of confirmatory evidence, its derivation from a ballad of Robin Hood suggests itself almost inevitably.

A simple ballad like that assumed as the foundation of fit V would hardly have concluded with the outlaws' taking refuge

---

[1]Wallace and a few followers, set upon by a band of English and pursued by a bloodhound, are running for shelter to a fortress, when one of his men gives out:

> Fawdoun tyryt, and said, he mycht nocht gang.
> Wallace was wa to leyff him in that thrang.
> He bade him ga, and said the strenth was ner;
> Bot he tharfor wald nocht fastir him ster.
> Wallace in ire on the crag can him ta
> With his gud suerd, and strak the hed him fra.
> Dreidless to ground derfly he duschit dede,
> Fra him he lap, and left him in that stede.
>
> *Wallace*, V, ll. 103-110.

Wallace's deed is justified by the poet on the ground that Fawdoun may have been shamming for the purpose of deserting his leader; and that if true he must in any event have been killed, by the enemy.

[2]The general situation resembles that of fit V. Butler and 800 Englishmen have beset Wallace and 19 companions in a wood, and he is fighting his way out. Crawford, one of the 19, is called "their host" because he had recently given the others shelter in his house.

> The worthy Scottis sone past throucht that melle:
> Craufurd, thar oyst, was sayr hurt on the kne,
> At erd he was; gud Wallace turned agayn,
> And at a straik he has the Butler slayn;
> Hynt wp that man wndyr his arm sa strang,
> Defendand him out off that felloun thrang,
> Gud rowm he maid amang thaim quhar he gais,
> With his rycht hand he slew V off thair fais;
> Bur furth Crawfurd, beforce of his persoun,
> IX akyrbreid, or euir he set him doun.
>
> *Wallace*, XI, ll. 507-516.

Cf. especially *Gest*, st. 302, "Lytell Johan was *hurte full sore, With an arowe in his kne*," and st. 308, "Up he toke hym on his backe, *And bare hym well a myle*."

in a knight's castle. Having fought their way out of Nottingham and kept the sheriff's men at their distance during their retreat to the wood, the outlaws, once in the shelter of the wood, probably needed no protection from their pursuers. In actual experience, and in the minds of the singers of Robin Hood ballads, a band of sevenscore outlaws within the wood must have been more than a match for a larger pursuing force of sheriff's men. It is probable, then, that in the ballad upon which fit V is based, the sheriff abandoned his pursuit when the outlaws reached the wood. Their reception by the knight into his castle is probably a later addition; and since it connects the story with an earlier part of the *Gest*—Robin's services to the knight (fits I and IV)—and with a later part—the knight's imprisonment by the sheriff and outlawry by the king (fits VI, VII)—this addition was with little question made by the compiler of the *Gest*.

The fifth fit, then, is based upon a single ballad of Robin Hood's victory at a shooting match and escape from arrest by the sheriff of Nottingham. This ballad has been well connected with the preceding and following narrative of the Gest by stanzas 281, 287, 297, 298, and 309-316, all, without much doubt, the work of the compiler.

Fit VI relates how the sheriff of Nottingham came to the high sheriff, summoned the *possc comitatus*,[1] and beset the knight's castle. The sheriff cried out, charging the knight with harboring the king's enemies. The knight replied that he would avow what he had done upon all his lands and told the sheriff to depart and learn the will of the king in the matter. The sheriff raised the siege[2] and departed for London, where he told

[1]Professor Gummere thus explains the lines:

317[3]. Howe the proudë shyref of Notyngham,
And men of armys stronge

318. Full fast cam to the hyë shyref,
The contre vp to route,

giving a *hue and cry* as alternative to *posse comitatus* (*Old English Ballads*, p. 318).

[2]The knight had said, "Wende furth, sirs, on your way" (321[1]). It is evident that not only the sheriff but the whole *posse comitatus* departed; for in sts. 327, 328, Robin Hood and Little John went to the greenwood.

the king how the knight had given aid and comfort to the outlaws. The king said he would be at Nottingham within two weeks and would capture both Robin Hood and the knight. He bade the sheriff go home and prepare archers to assist him in this purpose. The sheriff returned to Nottingham, but in the meantime Robin Hood and Little John (now whole of his wound) had gone to the greenwood (sts. 317-328). The sheriff was very sorry to have failed to capture Robin Hood. He lay in wait for the knight, captured him while hawking by the river-side, and led him in bonds to Nottingham. The knight's wife heard of this, rode straightway to Robin Hood in the forest, and begged him to save her lord from death. Robin and his men started up and hastened to Nottingham, sparing neither hedge nor ditch that lay before them. They met the sheriff in the street. Robin felled him with an arrow and smote off his head with his sword. His men drove off the sheriff's men. Robin cut the knight's bonds, gave him a bow, and took him away to the greenwood (329-353).

The earlier part of this fit (sts. 317-328) is evidently the work of the compiler of the *Gest*. The besetting by the sheriff of the knight's castle (sts. 317, 318) grows directly out of the concluding episode of fit V, in which the knight harbours the outlaws (sts. 309-316). This is proved by the words of the sheriff[1] (st. 319). The two episodes are evidently the work of the same person, and the connection of the first of them with division I shows this person to have been the compiler of the *Gest*.[2] Moreover, the knight's appeal to the king and the sheriff's visit to him[3] are without much doubt a deliberate preparation by the compiler of the *Gest* for the introduction, in the seventh and eighth fits, of the king's visit to Robin Hood. The

---

They could not have got out of the knight's castle and back to the wood if it had still been surrounded by the sheriff's forces.

[1]The proudē shyref loude gan crye,
And sayde, Thou traytour knight,
Thou kepest here the kynges enemys,
Agaynst the lawe and right.

[2]See above, p. 84.

[3]Stanzas 321-326.

conveying to the king of the information that the knight has helped the outlaws furnishes a motive for the king to come to Nottingham, and thus enables the compiler to bring him near enough to Robin Hood to permit of a meeting between them.

The passage beginning with stanza 309 and ending with stanza 328, which relates how the knight gave harbour to the outlaws when pursued by the sheriff (sts. 309-316), how the sheriff beset the knight's castle (sts. 317-318), how the knight defied the sheriff and appealed to the king (sts. 320, 321), how the sheriff told these things to the king, who determined to come to Nottingham and capture both the knight and Robin Hood (sts. 322-326), and how during the sheriff's absence Robin Hood and Little John returned to the greenwood (327, 328), is perhaps the most important connective passage in the entire *Gest*. It connects the knight, whose relations with Robin are the central theme of fits I, II, and IV, with Robin's adventures with the sheriff in fits V and VI and with his entertainment of the king in fits VII and VIII. In this passage, then, a skilful employment of the figure of the knight binds the three divisions of the *Gest* closely together. It is therefore difficult to explain it except as the invention of the compiler of the *Gest*.

The passage of connective matter with which fit VI begins (sts. 317-328) is followed by an adventure which occupies the rest of the fit (sts. 329-353) and which, though united by the last stanza with what follows,[1] might stand alone as a complete and independent ballad. It may well be based upon a ballad in which the sheriff of Nottingham took prisoner a gentle knight, Sir Richard at the Lee, and led him to Nottingham to be put to death; in which the knight's wife rode to the forest and begged Robin Hood to rescue her lord; and in which Robin and his men hastened to Nottingham, killed the sheriff, drove off his men, loosed the knight from his bonds, and took him to the forest to lead an outlaw life with them.

Version B of the ballad of *Robin Hood rescuing Three*

---

[1] 353. 'Thou shalt with me to grenë wode,
Without ony leasynge,
Tyll that I haue gete vs grace
Of Edwarde our comly kynge.'

Squires (140)[1] tells a very similar story and renders more probable the hypothesis that the adventure of fit VI is based upon a ballad. Version B exists in an English form entitled "Robin Hood rescuing the Widow's Three Sons," and a Scottish form called "Robin Hood and the Sheriff."[2] In both forms Robin meets an old woman, who tells him in the English form that three squires in Nottingham, in the Scottish that her three braw sons, are condemned to die.[3] He asks their offence. She replies that they have slain the king's deer, adding, in the English form, that the offence was committed in Robin's company.[4] He reminds the old woman that she had once given him a dinner, "implicitly as a reason for his exerting himself in behalf of the three squires"[5] (or, in the Scottish form and according to the title of the English, of her three sons). Robin Hood goes on and meets a palmer (a beggar in the Scottish). He exchanges clothes with him,[6] and goes to Nottingham, where he meets the sheriff and asks what he will give him for acting as hangman. The sheriff offers suits and pence. Robin says he will never learn the trade, pulls out his horn, and blows a loud blast.[7] His men come up, and the outlaws hang the sheriff and release the three men.[8]

---

[1]Version A in the Percy MS., p. 5. B in a York garland undated, and a Paisley garland of 1786; also in a garland of 1808. A Scottish version of B in the Kinloch MS., V, 288, printed by Child as an appendix to the ballad. C. *Robin Hood rescuing the Three Squires from Nottingham Gallows.* Six undated garlands. See Child, III, 177 ff.

[2]Child. Appendix to 140.

[3]English form of B, st. $3^{3,4}$ Scottish form of B, st. $3^{3,4}$.

> '6. 'O what have they done?' said bold Robin Hood,
> 'I pray thee tell to me:'
> 'It's for slaying of the king's fallow deer,
> Bearing their long bows with thee.' (English form.)
>
> 6. 'O what hae they done then?' quo Robin Hood,
> 'I pray thee tell unto me:'
> 'O they killed the king's fallow deer,
> And this day are condemned to die.' (Scottish form.)

[5]Child, III, 178, col. 2.

[6]B, English, sts. 8-17; Scottish, sts. 8-14.

[7]B, English, sts. 18-25; Scottish, sts. 15-22^2.

[8]B, English, sts. 26-29; Scottish, sts. 22^3-25.

Here is a ballad of a woman who comes to Robin Hood and tells him that three squires or her three sons, whose connection with his band is by no means definitely stated, are condemned to die in Nottingham. Robin enters Nottingham in disguise, summons his men by horn, hangs the sheriff, and releases the three prisoners. In a condition so mutilated that we cannot tell how far it differed from this ballad, another version exists in the Percy MS. There is a third version in a number of late but undated garlands, and the conclusion of the story has also been united with a ballad or a suggestion from a ballad of Robin Hood meeting his match, to form the seventeenth century ballad of *Robin Hood and the Beggar,* I (133). This ballad, then, exists in four slightly varying versions in copies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and its concluding episode has been borrowed to make up another seventeenth century ballad. The fact that it is so widespread is a presumption in favour of its derivation from an earlier ballad. The theme furnishes so good an example of Robin's kindness to the distressed and hatred of the sheriff that one cannot help thinking it to have formed the basis of one of the earliest ballads of Robin Hood.

Such a ballad in a very simple form may well be represented by the adventure in fit VI. Here the story is parallel to that of *Robin Hood rescuing Three Squires* (140), but much simpler. A woman comes to Robin requesting him to rescue her husband, who is being taken to Nottingham to be put to death. Robin and his men go directly to Nottingham, kill the sheriff, and take away the prisoner. Here we have but one prisoner instead of three, and no disguise as a beggar. The account in the *Gest* may well represent an actual adventure, which entered the Robin Hood cycle as a simple ballad, and was incorporated in this form into the *Gest,* but which continued to be sung separately, and after two centuries of oral transmission and development, including the addition of the disguise as a beggar and other commonplaces, took the form of *Robin Hood rescuing Three Squires* (140), the form in which it has come down to us.

Confirmatory evidence for the early attachment of such a story to the Robin Hood cycle is furnished by the adventure of

Wulric the Heron, a follower of Hereward, who rescued four brothers from hanging at Wrokesham Bridge.[1] Gamelyn's rescue of his brother, Sir Ote, a "good knight and hende"[2] is also not unlike Robin's rescue of the gentle knight in fit VI. Sir Ote is fettered and about to be executed in place of Gamelyn, for whose appearance he has given security. Gamelyn and his men come to the moot-hall, hang the sheriff and the justice, and release Sir Ote.[3] The resemblance to fit VI is, however, a very general one. The scene of action differs and the wife's message is absent.

The account of the capture and rescue of the knight (sts. 329-353) contains a few passages which are not suitable to the state of affairs described in the connective passage at the beginning of the fit (sts. 317-328). They indicate a change of situation not provided for in the preceding narrative and strengthen the probability that the portion of fit VI wherein they occur is drawn from a separate ballad. In stanzas 325 and 326, the king says that he will be at Nottingham within a fortnight and will capture the knight and Robin Hood; and he bids the sheriff go home and gather together good archers for his assistance. Evidently both the king and the sheriff expect a hard struggle. It is surprising that on the sheriff's return he transgresses the king's plans, lies in wait for the knight himself, and captures him as he is peacefully hawking by the riverside (330[3]-332). Similarly it is hard to understand why the knight, who must have known that there was trouble in store for him when he defied the sheriff and when the sheriff went off to the king (sts. 319-322), should have been out hawking instead of fortifying himself in his castle or withdrawing to his friends the outlaws. Moreover, Robin Hood, who was in the knight's castle when he defied the sheriff and must have known of the sheriff's departure to the king, shows in st. 338[3] a surprising ignorance of the situa-

[1]Adducti sunt iiij. fratres innocenter damnati ut crucifigerentur, carnificibus perterritis . . . . innocentes viriliter erepti sunt, et inimici eorum nonnulli occisi.—*Gesta Herwardi,* p. 372.

[2]*Tale of Gamelyn,* ed. Skeat, l. 728.

[3]Ibid., ll. 787-886.

tion. The knight's wife, who has just come to the forest, says to him:

337. 'Late neuer my wedded lorde
Shamefully slayne be;
He is fast bowne to Notingham warde,
For the loue of the.'

338. Anone than saide goode Robyn
To that lady so fre,
'What man hath your lorde i-take?'
. . . . . .[1]

With the knight's recent defiance of the sheriff in mind, it is hard to see how Robin could have asked who took the knight prisoner.[2]

The fact is that after stanza 330[2] the situation of the preceding part of the fit is lost sight of.[3] What we have is an account of a knight who for some service he had rendered to the outlaws[4] was surprised while hawking and led to be executed. Robin Hood had no suspicion of this until it was told him by the knight's wife. Then he hastened to Nottingham and rescued the knight. There is no indication in these stanzas that the sheriff had beset the knight's castle or visited the king and obtained his promise that he would come and take the outlaw and the knight. In fact, the conduct of the sheriff, the knight, and Robin Hood is inconsistent with preceding events of such a kind. This brings us back with strengthened conviction to the conclusion that stanzas 330[3]-353 are based upon a ballad.

---

[1]The final line was perhaps: "Truth than tell thou me."

[2]This inconsistency, as well as that between the king's order and the sheriff's performance (sts. 325, 326 and 331, 332), is pointed out by Fricke, *Die Robin-Hood-Balladen*, pp. 31, 32.

[3]Except in the one line, "for the loue of the" (337[4]), which is so general that it need not refer to the harbouring of the outlaws in 309-316 and the knight's defiance of the sheriff in 320, 321.

[4]He is fast bowne to Notingham warde,
For the loue of the. (337[3-4].)

Cf.:

Its for slaying of the king's fallow deer,
Bearing their long bows with thee.
Child, III, p. 180, col. 2. See above, p. 87, n. 4.

This ballad may have been an early form of *Robin Hood rescuing Three Squires,* or a ballad of similar outline,[1] and may have related how a former associate of Robin Hood, or a man who had done him some service, not particularly specified, was arrested by the sheriff and condemned to death; how the man's wife, knowing his hatred of the sheriff and his kindness to the oppressed, successfully pleaded with Robin Hood to rescue her husband, and how Robin hastened to the city, cut the man's bonds, and killed the sheriff.

But how, under this hypothesis, is Robin's intense anger at the sheriff to be explained? To his fury and hatred, as exhibited in this part of fit V, Fricke has drawn attention.[2] When Robin hears of the knight's capture he starts up "as man that had ben wode" (340[1-2]), and commands all his men to follow him or leave his service (st. 341). They spare neither hedge nor ditch that lies in the straight course to Nottingham (st. 342). Robin's words:

346. 'This seuen yere, by dere worthy God,
Ne yede I this fast on fote,'

show the swiftness with which he makes the journey. He expresses an eager desire for revenge upon the sheriff:

343. 'I mak myn auowe to God,' sayde Robyn,
'The sherif wolde I fayne see;
And if I may hym take
I-quyte shall it be.'

Even after he has felled the sheriff with an arrow and smitten off his head his rage is not appeased:

349. 'Lye thou there, thou proudë sherife,
Euyll mote thou cheue!
There myght no man to the truste
The whyles thou were a lyue.'

Fricke[3] does not think that this fierce hatred could have been roused by the capture of the knight alone. He believes that

[1] See above, p. 88.
[2] *Die Robin-Hood-Balladen,* p. 19 ff.
[3] Pp. 19-21.

there was a personal motive as well, and that the stanzas in which the hatred of the sheriff is emphasized come from a ballad fused with the account of the rescue of the knight, in which this motive was made clear. He thus states his theory: "Wir haben in dem sechsten fytte eine Verschmelzung zweier verschiedener Erzählungen (Balladen) vor uns, 'die Befreiung eines Ritters durch Robin' und 'Robins blutige Rache an dem Sheriff,' der, wenn wir recht vermuten, *einen Preis auf seinen Kopf gesetzt hat.*" In confirmation of this theory he points out that stanza 333:

> The sheref sware a full grete othe,
> Bi hym that dyed on rode,
> He had leuer than an hundred pound
> That he had Robyn Hode,

is unsuited to its context (where the capture of the knight, not of Robin Hood, is in question[1]), and might well have been taken from a ballad of Robin's revenge on the sheriff for setting a price on his head. Stanza 329, he thinks, is clearly the beginning of this ballad:

> Robyn Hode walked in the forest,
> Vnder the leuys grene;
> The proudë shyref of Notyngham
> Thereof he had grete tene.

Fricke now turns to the ballad of *Robin Hood and the Butcher* (122), version A. He points out that the first three

[1]St. 333 interrupts the course of the narrative of sts. 332 and 334; and there is no reason why it should be interrupted, our interest being concentrated on the knight. 332 and 334 are evidently consecutive.

> 332. Toke he there this gentyll knight,
> With men of armys stronge,
> And led hym to Notyngham warde,
> Bounde bothe fote and hande.

> 334. This harde the knyghtës wyfe,
> A fayr lady and a free;
> She set hir on a gode palfrey,
> To grenë wode anone rode she.

The opening line of 334 evidently applies to st. 332. It does not fit st. 333. The news heard by the wife which started her to the wood and which she told Robin was the news of the knight's capture. She said nothing of the sheriff's desire for Robin's head, and its mention here is an irrelevancy.

stanzas are not suitable to the story which follows, and are probably derived from the opening of another ballad.[1] These stanzas, he shows, are very similar to stanzas 329 and 333 of fit VI. He thinks it clear that stanzas 1-3 of *Robin Hood and the Butcher* and stanzas 329 and 333 of the *Gest* have their common source in a ballad of Robin's revenge upon the sheriff for setting a price on his head, and considers this a strong confirmation if not an actual proof of his theory that fit VI is a fusion of a revenge and a rescue ballad. A parallel arrangement of *Robin Hood and the Butcher,* stanzas 1-3, and *Gest,* 329, 333, will show their close resemblance.

Robin Hood and the Butcher, A	*Gest,* Fit VI.
1. But Robin he walkes in the greene fforrest As merry as bird on boughe, But he that feitches good Robin's head Hee'le find him game enoughe.	329. Robyn Hode walked in the forest, Vnder the leuys grene; The proudē shyref of Notyngham Thereof he had grete tene.
2. But Robine he walkes in the greene fforrest, Vnder his trusty-tree; Sayes, Hearken, hearken, my merrymen all, What tydings is come to me.	
3. The sheriffe he hath made a cry, Hee'le have my head i-wis; But ere a tweluemonth come to an end I may chance to light on his.	333. The sheref sware a full grete othe, Bi hym that dyed on rode, He had leuer than an hundred pound That he had Robyn Hode.

[1] Pp. 17, 21. This is fully justified by st. 3:

The sheriffe he hath made a cry,
Hee'le have my head i-wis;
But ere a tweluemonth come to an end
I may chance to light on his.

This evidently belongs to a ballad in which Robin Hood kills the sheriff, not to *R. H. and the Butcher,* in which he merely plays a trick upon him and releases him. The last line looks definitely toward the killing of the sheriff.

The resemblance of these stanzas and their lack of connection with their context in both cases are very strong evidence that they have their common source in the opening stanzas of a ballad in which Robin Hood took revenge upon the sheriff for setting a price upon his head.[1] Without this probability, which Fricke has pretty well established, his argument that Robin's hatred of the sheriff as expressed in stanzas 340-349 is not properly motived and therefore drawn from a ballad of Robin's revenge on the sheriff for a personal wrong, would not be very convincing. As Dr. Hart points out (p. 96), Fricke has stated on page 14 that Robin Hood can have no personal ground for his hatred of the clergy. He is "the representative of the whole people who hate the clergy." He is also the representative of all outlaws, who hate the officers of the law. "There seems to be no reason," says Dr. Hart, "why the author of the *Gest* should have felt lack of motive in one case more than in the other."

Both Fricke and Hart, who is arguing against him, ignore the principal objection to the position that Robin's hatred of the sheriff is not properly motived. The sheriff's breach, in fit V, stanza 296 ff, of his promise sworn to the outlaws in fit III (st. 202-204) furnishes an ample motive for Robin's fiercest anger. After that perfidy and Robin's denunciation and threat in the fifth fit:

> 'And wo be thou! thou proudë sheryf,
> Thus gladdynge thy gest;
> Other wyse thou behotë me
> In yonder wylde forest.

---

[1] The words in *R. H. and the Butcher*, st. 3^{1-2}, practically state that the sheriff has set a price on Robin's head.

> The sheriffe he hath made a cry,
> Hee'le have my head i-wis.

Fricke instances Grafton's statement (Chronicle I, 221, ed. of 1809) that "the king caused his proclamation to be made that whosoever would bryng him quicke or dead, the king would geve him a great summe of money, as by the records in the Exchequer is to be sene." He might also have instanced the passage in the *Tale of Gamelyn*, 697 ff, in which Gamelyn was cried and made "wolves-heed," and the law of Edward the Confessor upon which our knowledge of the term is based. Skeat (*Oxford Chaucer* V, p. 487). The end of st. 3 also indicates that Robin took revenge on the sheriff.

298. 'But had I the in grenë wode,
Under my trystell-tre,
Thou sholdest leue me a better wedde[1]
Than thy trewe lewtë.'

the motive for Robin's hatred of the sheriff in fit VI is obvious; and that the compiler of the *Gest* did not give it more definite expression by making Robin refer as plainly as in the stanzas just quoted to the sheriff's broken promise is no proof that this reason for Robin's hatred was not clearly in the mind of the compiler of the *Gest*. It is certainly plain enough on attentive and consecutive reading.

Robin's hatred of the sheriff in stanzas 340-349 might then be explained as typical of the outlaw and derived from the simple rescue ballad which probably underlies fit VI; moreover, the sheriff's treachery in fit V, although not definitely referred to by Robin, is recent enough to be remembered and furnishes ample excuse. There is, therefore, as far as motive is concerned, no need to derive Robin's hatred of the sheriff in stanzas 340-349 from a separate ballad. But by establishing the probability that stanzas 329 and 333 are drawn from the opening of a ballad in which Robin Hood killed the sheriff for setting a price on his head, Fricke has also made it probable that stanzas 340-349, in which Robin exhibits bitter hatred of the sheriff, and kills him, were influenced by or drawn from the conclusion of this ballad. We may accept, therefore, Fricke's theory that fit VI (or rather the latter part of fit VI from stanza 329 to 353) is a fusion of two ballads: "Robin's Rescue of a Knight" and "Robin's Revenge upon the Sheriff for Setting a Price on his Head."

This fusion was probably the work of the compiler of the *Gest*. By the use of a ballad of Robin Hood's visit to Nottingham and pursuit by the sheriff, he had told in fit V how the sheriff broke his oath; he had added, probably on his own account, the episode of the knight's receiving Robin into his castle. At the beginning of fit VI (sts. 317-328) he had related how, on account of his kindness, the knight incurred the enmity of the sheriff and of the king. He had now to tell of the results of

[1] i.e., "thy head"! (Note by Professor Kittredge.)

the sheriff's enmity, the punishment of the sheriff's treachery, and the king's intervention. He had in mind, no doubt, a ballad of the capture of a knight by the sheriff and his rescue by Robin Hood. This ballad probably ended with the slaying of the sheriff by Robin Hood, so that it fulfilled his first two requirements. But he also knew a ballad in which Robin killed the sheriff for setting a price on his head. Robin's indignation against the sheriff was naturally greater here than in the ballad of the rescue of the knight, and some stanzas of this ballad of revenge were more suitable to describe the punishment of the sheriff's treachery. He accordingly fused the two ballads. He began with the opening stanza of the ballad of revenge (329) and then followed the outline of the rescue ballad, inserting another stanza from the ballad of revenge (333) and probably modifying his account of the slaying of the sheriff in accordance with it.

A review of fits III, V, and VI shows that we have in them a series of five simple ballads of the enmity of Robin Hood and the sheriff, well connected with one another, and securely bound by connective passages and internal references to the other divisions of the *Gest*. The third fit is based upon two ballads, and one episode was suggested by a third. Stanzas 145-150, 153-163^{2}, 174-180 are drawn from a ballad in which one of Robin's men took service with the sheriff, beat his servants, and robbed him. Stanzas 163^{3}-173 contain an episode inserted in this ballad by the suggestion of some form of a ballad of Robin Hood meeting his match. Stanzas 181-204 represent a ballad in which Robin or one of his men enticed the sheriff into his power. Whether these ballads were compounded by the compiler of the *Gest* or by an earlier singer or reciter it is impossible to say. Perhaps we should assume their union at an earlier stage. This fit contains but one internal reference to the preceding narrative (stanzas 151, 152). These two, with the "lyth and lystyn" stanza which opens the fit, are evidently the work of the compiler. Fit V is based upon a ballad represented by stanzas 282-286, 288-296^{2}, 299-308, in which Robin Hood and his men went to Nottingham to take part in a shooting match, Robin won the prize, the sheriff and his men attacked

him, and the outlaws fought their way back to the forest. Connection with fit III is supplied by stanzas 287, 296[3-4], 297 and 298, all evidently composed by the compiler of the *Gest*. Stanzas 309-316, which contain the episode of the outlaws taking refuge in the knight's castle, connect this fit with the first division and with the sixth fit. They are with little doubt the invention of the compiler of the *Gest*. The opening eleven stanzas of fit VI (317-328) spring directly from the situation at the close of fit V. They connect fit VI not only with the preceding fit, but with division I (through the knight's repayment of Robin's services by championing him) and with division III (through the appeal to the king). They are therefore the unquestionable invention of the compiler of the *Gest*. The second part of fit VI—stanzas 329-353[2]—tells a story containing no direct reference to what precedes and follows. It is a fusion of two ballads, one of Robin Hood rescuing a knight captured by the sheriff, the other of Robin's revenge upon the sheriff for setting a price on his head. The introduction of the latter ballad gave this fit several excellent stanzas (e.g., 329 and 333) and brought it into unmistakable connection with the sheriff's treachery in fit V.

It is evident that the topography of the ballads of Robin's enmity to the sheriff upon which the second division of the *Gest* is based differed from the topography of the ballads of Robin Hood and the Knight and Robin Hood and the Monk which underlie the first division.

In fits I, II, and IV, Robin's headquarters are said to be in Barnsdale,[1] "a woodland region in the West Riding of Yorkshire, a little to the south of Pontefract and somewhat further to the north of Doncaster."[2] With one exception, to be noted

[1]Sts. 3, 21, 82, 134, 213. There is evidence that at the beginning of the fourteenth century Barnsdale was infested by outlaws. In 1307 the Bishops of St. Andrew's and Glasgow and the Abbot of Scone were conveyed at the king's charge from Scotland to Winchester. We learn from the royal accounts that they had a guard, sometimes of eight archers, sometimes of twelve; but that when they were passing from Pontefract to Tickhill the guard was increased to twenty-four archers—*propter Barnsdale*. Joseph Hunter, *The Ballad Hero, Robin Hood*, London, 1852, p. 14.

[2]Child, *English and Scottish Ballads*, III, 50, col. 2 f. See this passage in connection with the whole discussion.

later, the other places named in these fits are consonant with this locality. The Sayles is "a very small tenancy of the manor of Pontefract." The Great North Road, which traverses Barnsdale forest, was sometimes called Watling Street. An outlaw with headquarters in Barnsdale might well have sent his men to these places to "wait after" a guest. The knight lived in Verysdale (st. 126), which was probably Wryesdale, "an extensive tract of wild country, part of the old forest of Lancashire, a few miles to the southeast of Lancaster. The knight's son had slain a knight and a squire of Lancaster, **a**, Lancashire, **b**, **f**, **g**, 53." Wryesdale is at least seventy miles to the north and west of Barnsdale, but there is no indication in fits I, II, and IV that the knight lived close at hand. St. Mary Abbey "here besyde" (54) was "in Yorke toune" (84^3) about twenty miles from Barnsdale. The knight might well have ridden there and paid his debt the day after he received the money from Robin Hood.

In fits III, V, and VI the action centres about Nottingham, fifty miles to the south of Barnsdale. In fit III Little John takes service with the sheriff of Nottingham. One morning the sheriff goes out hunting. In his absence Little John steals his plate and money and carries it to Robin Hood in the greenwood. Then he runs five miles in the forest, meets the sheriff, whose day's hunt is not yet over,[1] and leads him to Robin Hood. These events all occur upon a single day. Obviously this would have been impossible unless on that day Robin Hood had been in some forest much nearer to Nottingham than Barnsdale is.

In fit V, Robin and his men go to Nottingham, take part in the shooting match, and are attacked by the sheriff and his men. "A lytell within the wode," which is not very far from the town,[2] stands the castle of the knight to whom Robin made the loan, now for the first time named, Syr Rychard at the Lee (sts. 309, 310). He receives the outlaws into his castle (sts 311-

[1]This is evident, since he does not know of Little John's theft (st. $183^{3,4}$).

[2]Little John, having been wounded in the fight with the sheriff's men (st. 302), is carried by Much "well a myle" (st. 308^2). Directly afterwards (sts. 309-311) the knight is said to have received the outlaws into his castle.

316). Here, in direct contradiction to stanza 126, where his home is said to be in Verysdale (Wryesdale, near Lancaster[1]), the knight's castle is placed just outside of Nottingham, over a hundred miles away.

When, in fit VI, Sir Richard at the Lee has been captured by the sheriff of Nottingham (330^{3}-332), his wife hears of it and rides to the forest to tell Robin Hood (334, 335). She reaches him very quickly. For in stanza 339^{3-4}, referring evidently to the sheriff of Nottingham, she says:

> He is nat yet thre mylës
> Passed on his way.

Evidently Robin's headquarters are not far from the knight's castle near Nottingham.

Throughout the second division, therefore, the close relation of all the adventures to Nottingham compel the assignment of Robin Hood's headquarters to a place within a day's journey of that town. There is no hint in the *Gest* of a change from the Barnsdale headquarters in division I. But it is probable that in the ballads of Robin's enmity to the sheriff of Nottingham which underlie division II, Robin's headquarters were not in Barnsdale but nearer Nottingham. This supposition is confirmed by the fact that in the ballad of *Robin Hood and the Monk* (119), the theme of which is the capture and rescue of Robin Hood in Nottingham, Robin's headquarters are definitely stated to be in "mery Scherwode."[2]

Sherwood forest, a district twenty by twenty-five miles in extent, is situated just to the north of Nottingham. It is named as Robin's headquarters in several of the later ballads.[3] Since

---

[1] See p. 98, above.

[2] St. 16. þen Robyn goes to Notyngham,
Hym selfe mornyng allone,
And Litull John to mery Scherwode,
The pathes he knew ilkone.

76^{3-4}. And Robyn was in mery Scherwode,
As liȝt as lef on lynde.

[3] *R. H. and the Tanner* (126) st. 3; *Robin Hood's Delight* (136), st. 2; *R. H. and the Pedlars* (137), st. 3; *R. H. and Queen Katherine* (145), A, st. 37; *Robin Hood's Chase* (146), sts. 12, 19, 20.

it appears in so many of these, and in the oldest and finest ballad of Robin Hood outside of the *Gest,* namely *Robin Hood and the Monk,* it is probable that there was a whole group of ballads in which Robin's headquarters were in Sherwood forest, and that the ballads which underlie division II belong to this group.

There were also separate ballads in which Robin's headquarters were in Barnsdale. Those extant among the genuinely popular ballads of Robin Hood are: *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* (118), stanzas 11^{3-4}, 12^{1}, 45^{3},

> Iohn is gone to Barnesdale,
> The gates he knowes eche one.[1]
> And when hee came to Barnesdale . . . .
> . . . .
> Ffor now I will goe to Barnesdale,

and probably *Robin Hood's Death* (120). For Robin's death occurs at Kyrkesly (*Gest,* 454. Churchlees or Churchlee, in *Robin Hood's Death,* A, 1, 11, 12, 24), and Kyrkesley is nearer to Barnsdale than to Nottingham. Barnsdale also appears as Robin's haunt in a number of later ballads.[2] The ballads from which division I of the *Gest* was made up were evidently of this Barnsdale group.

The discrepancies between the topography of the first and second divisions of the *Gest* are, therefore, best explained by Professor Child's theory that there was originally a Barnsdale cycle and a Sherwood cycle of Robin Hood ballads, the latter relating the exploits of Robin in the forest of Sherwood near Nottingham and in particular his contests with the sheriff of that place.[3] The ballads which underlie the first division belong to the Barnsdale cycle; those which underlie the second division belong to the Sherwood cycle. The compiler of the *Gest* connected the representatives of the two cycles without giving consistency to the topography. He made Robin Hood mention the

---

[1] Cf. *R. H. and the Monk* (119), st. 16^{3-4}.

[2] *R. H. and the Beggar,* II (134), st. 2^{3}.
R. H. and the Bishop of Hereford (144), A, sts. 2, 16, 17.
King's Disguise and Friendship with R. H. (151), st. 4^{2}.

[3] Child, *English and Scottish Ballads,* III, 51, col. 1.

sheriff of Nottingham, who belonged originally to the Sherwood cycle,[1] among the people Robin's men were to attack if they met them in Barnsdale (st. 15^{3-4}); and he gave no indication of a change of headquarters from Barnsdale when he incorporated the ballads of the Sherwood cycle into the *Gest.*

The change in the knight's abode from Wryesdale in Lancashire (Verysdale, st. 126^{4}) to the neighbourhood of Nottingham (sts. 309, 310, 330^{3} ff) may be explained by the supposition that in the ballad of Robin's rescue of a knight, upon which stanzas 330^{3}-353 are largely based, the knight lived near Nottingham; and that the compiler of the *Gest,* wishing to introduce the knight of the first division into the second, simply identified the two without any attention to the geographical discrepancy. For the knight as a figure in the Sherwood-Nottingham adventures he was probably indebted to the ballad of Robin's rescue of a knight; and from this ballad he perhaps drew the name Sir Richard at the Lee (st. 331^{2}), which does not occur in fits I, II, and IV. The occurrence of this name and the location of the castle near Nottingham in fit V (sts. 309, 310) might be taken as an indication that the whole episode which these stanzas introduce (sts. 309-316) formed a part of the original ballad upon which fit V is based. But the probability has been already pointed out[2] that this episode is the invention of the compiler of the *Gest;* and in this case he might easily have drawn the name and location from the ballad of Robin's rescue of a knight which he used as the basis for stanzas 330^{3}-353 of fit VI.

[1]The sheriff of Nottingham had early become Robin's enemy and was as likely to figure in the Barnsdale as the Sherwood Ballads. Cf. *R. H. and Guy of Gisborne* (118).

[2]See above, p. 84.

III.

Division III, exclusive of the concluding stanzas, 451-456, which are a mere epilogue, is thus summarized by Child:

"How the king, coming in person to apprehend Robin Hood and the knight, disguised himself as an abbot, was stopped by Robin Hood, feasted on his own deer, and entertained with an exhibition of archery, in the course of which he was recognized by Robin Hood, who asked his grace and received a promise thereof, on condition that he and his men should enter into the king's service; and how the king, for a jest, disguised himself and his company in the green of the outlaws, and going back to Nottingham caused a general flight of the people, which he stopped by making himself known; how he pardoned the knight; and how Robin Hood, after fifteen months in the king's court, heart-sick and deserted by all his men but John and Scathlock, obtained a week's leave of the king to go on a pilgrimage to Saint Mary Magdalen of Barnsdale, and would never come back again in two and twenty years, the seventh and eighth fit, 354-450."[1]

That this narrative is based upon a ballad or ballads of Robin Hood and the King cannot be proved by the aid of the extant single ballads of Robin Hood. One of these, *The King's Disguise and Friendship with Robin Hood* (151), treats the same theme, but it is evidently what Professor Child calls it, "a loose paraphrase, with omissions, of the seventh and eighth fits of the *Gest*."[2] It is an eighteenth century ballad, written for the press,

---

[1] *English and Scottish Ballads*, III, 50.

[2] Cf. *Gest*, st. 371 and *King's Disguise*, st. $3^{3,4}$.
" " " 376 " " " " 6.
" " " 384 " " " " 7.
" " " $386^{1,2}$ " " " " $8^{1,2}$.
" " " 389-391 " " " " 17-19.
" " " 411 " " " " 31.
" " " 428, 429 " " " " 33^{3}-35.
" " " 430^{3}-431 " " " " 37.

The writer of *King's Disguise* knew other parts of the *Gest* as well. Cf. st. 11 with *Gest*, sts. $13^{3,4}$, $14^{3,4}$; st. 21 with *Gest*, st. 33. Stanza 38:

and furnishes no evidence bearing upon the derivation of fits VII and VIII.

But there are abundant reasons for believing that an encounter between Robin and the king was the subject of one or more of the early Robin Hood ballads. Stories of such encounters between a king, unrecognized as such, and one of his subjects are common and popular the world over. In England and in English popular poetry they are particularly numerous. The tale of *The King and the Barker*[1] and its descendants, the history[2] and the ballad[3] of *King Edward the Fourth and a Tanner of Tamworth*, preserve in ballad metre one of the simpler of these stories. King Edward, while hunting, meets a tanner and asks him the way. The tanner, not knowing the king, bids him turn at the next gallows. The king then asks the tanner to ride with him. The tanner reluctantly consents; he suspects that the king is a thief and answers his questions roughly. At the king's suggestion he changes horses with him, throwing his hides and horns over the saddle of his new mount. Frightened by the horns, the horse runs away with the tanner and throws him off. The king's men come up. The tanner thinks at first that he will

---

'What's that Robin Hood?' then said the sheriff;
'That varlet I do hate;
Both me and mine he caused to dine,
And servd us all with one plate.'

is perhaps a reminiscence of fit III, st. 191.

[1]Library of the University of Cambridge, MS. Ee. IV, 35. I, fol. 19b. Printed by Ritson: *Pieces of Ancient Popular Poetry*, 1791, p. 57; by Hazlitt: *Remains of the Early Popular Poetry of England*, 1864, vol. I, pp. 1-10; by Child in an Appendix to the ballad of *King Edward the Fourth and a Tanner of Tamworth, Ballads*, vol. V, p. 78-81.

[2]*A merrie, pleasant and delectable Historie, between King Edward the Fourth and a Tanner of Tamworth*, etc. Entered, Stationer's Registers, 1600, October 6. (Arber III, 173.) Printed by John Danter, 1596, at London, and by W. White at London, 1613. The first of these editions in the Bodleian, 4° C. 39, Art. Seld., the second in Corpus Christi College library, X. G. 2.11. 4th tract. Reprinted by Child as an appendix to the ballad, V, pp. 81-83. Child agrees with Ritson that the history is derived from the tale of *The King and the Barker* (V, p. 68, col. 1).

[3]*A pleasant new ballad of King Edward the Fourth and a Tanner of Tamworth, as he rode a hunting with his nobles towards* (or *to*) *Drayton Basset. To an excellent new tune.* Printed by Child, vol. V, no. 273, pp. 67-78, from Wood, Douce and Roxburghe broadsides. "The ballad, as we have it, was made by abridging the fifty-six stanzas of the history to thirty-nine, with other changes" (Child, V, p. 68, col. 1).

be robbed, then, when he finds who his companion is, that he will be hanged. The king, however, makes him a handsome present. This tale represents a large type of stories common everywhere and sometimes based on actual fact, in which a king, unrecognized as such, meets one of his subjects, converses with him on an equal footing, and at the end of the interview reveals himself or is revealed to the person with whom he has been talking.[1]

In another type of story, the king, disguised, or merely unrecognized, not only converses with the man whom he meets, but goes home to lodge with him and, being unknown, is treated without ceremony. An early example of this type in England is the well known story of how King Alfred, his kingdom overrun by the Danes, took refuge with his cowherd and was scolded by the cowherd's wife for letting her cakes burn.[2] This story

[1]To this type belongs the story of *King James and the Tinker.* This tale is the subject of a ballad—not admitted by Professor Child to his collection, but summarized by him in his introduction to *King Edward the Fourth and a Tanner of Tamworth* (273), vol. V, p. 73 f. In a foot-note he enumerates the editions. *King James and the Tinker* is in the Douce collection, III, fol. 126b, 136b. *King James the First and the Tinker,* Garland of Mirth and Delight, n. d. *King James and the Tinkler,* ed. Dixon, in Richardson's *Borderer's Table Book. King James I and the Tinkler,* in *Ancient Poems, Ballads and Songs,* p. 109 ff, Percy Society, vol. xvii. *King James the First and the fortunate Tinker,* noted by Halliwell as first piece in *The King and Tinker's Garland,* Sheffield, 1745 (Notices of Fugitive Tracts, p. 29, no. 36, Percy Society, vol. xxix). *King James V and the Tinker,* inserted by A. Small in his *Interesting Roman Antiquities recently Discovered in Fife,* Edinburgh, 1823, p. 283 ff. *The King and the Tinkler* in Maidment, *Scotish Ballads and Songs,* 1859, p. 92 (Whether James I or James V not stated.) *The King and the Tinker,* in Kinloch MS., vol. V, pp. 293 ff (James the Fifth). King James I, or James V, while out hunting, drops his nobles and rides to an alehouse. Here he drinks with a tinker who expresses a wish to see the king. The king bids the tinker get up behind him and he will show him the king. He will know him by the fact that all but he will be uncovered. They ride into the forest and meet the nobles. The tinker asks his guide who is the king. He replies, "It is thou or I, for the rest are uncovered." The tinker falls to the ground and begs pardon, but the king bids him stand up, makes him a knight, and grants him three thousand pounds a year. The story of James V and John Howieson in Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather,* ch. xxiv, is similar to this, but like the next type of story to be considered, includes a visit to the court. The scene of the revelation is more effective. It is James who asks his companion who is the king, and John Howieson who replies, "It must be thou or I." Cf. Scott's use of the same motive, in the last canto of *The Lady of the Lake.*

[2]This story is an interpolation in Asser's *Life of King Alfred,* 53, see W. H. Stevenson's edition, Oxford, 1904, pp 41-42, 256 ff.

is the basis of a poem entitled *The Shepherd and the King,* extant only in seventeenth century broadsides and probably not much earlier in composition.[1] King Alfred (whose oppression by the Danes has no place in this poem) disguises himself in ragged clothes and goes out to see lowly life. He meets a shepherd and fights with him for a taste of his scrip and bottle.[2] After four hours the king cries truce. The shepherd offers him employment as his man. The king accepts and goes home with him. Dame Gillian, the shepherd's wife, doubts him to be a cut-throat and threatens to beat him for letting her cake burn. Next morning, before the shepherd and his wife are out of bed, Alfred blows his horn, and his lords and knights come to the door. The shepherd and his wife expect to be hanged, but the king gives them a thousand wethers and promises to change the cottage into a stately hall.

In a type of story still further developed, the king, having been entertained unrecognized by a man of lower rank, receives in turn a visit from his former host and reveals to him the identity of his guest. Its earliest appearance is in the fourth book of the *Speculum Ecclesiae* of Giraldus Cambrensis, written about 1216. Giraldus relates how King Henry II was separated from his men in hunting and passed the night in a Cistercian monastery. Being unknown to the monks, he was taken for a knight of the king's retinue, and was entertained at a rich supper, after which he and his hosts pledged each other in frequent cups of wine. In place of the ordinary challenge and response, "wes heil" and "drinc heil," the monks taught their guest to join them in the use of "pril" and "wril." Next day the king rejoined his party and went to the court. Before long

[1] "A merry Songe of a Kinge and a Shepherd" was licensed to Ric. Jones, September 25, 1578. Arber's Reprint of the Stationers' Registers, II, 338. There is an entry of 'King and Shepherd' in 1624, Dec 14 (Arber, IV, 131). *The Shepherd and the King, and of Gillian, the Shepheard's Wife, with her Churlish answers: being full of mirth and merry pastime. Roxburghe Ballads,* I, 504, printed by Chappell, *The Roxburghe Ballads,* III, 210. In several other broadside collections. See Child, V, 73, note 3.

[2] ll. 29-32. Professor Child (III, 165) compares this and the succeeding fight for four hours followed by the king crying truce (stanzas 6-17) with *Robin Hood and the Shepherd* (135), sts. 2-13.

the abbot and two monks appeared, asking the king favours for their monastery. The king granted them and invited the abbot to luncheon. After the meal, the king pledged the abbot in a cup of wine, calling out, "Pril." Realizing that he had entertained the king, the abbot begged forgiveness; but the king reassured him and swore that they should drink "pril" and "wril" that day in his house as in the monastery.[1]

Two poems extant in manuscripts of about 1450 relate varying forms of a similar story. In *King Edward and the Hermit*[2] King Edward is separated from his men in hunting,[3] comes to a hermitage, and forces the hermit to give him a night's lodging. The hermit gives him bread, cheese, and thin drink. The king asks for venison and promises that no man shall know of it. Thereupon the hermit brings it and afterwards a four-gallon pot of wine. He teaches the king a new drinking challenge and reply, "fusty bandyas," and "stryke pantere." They drink until near day. The king, who has told the hermit that his name is Jack Fletcher, makes him promise to come and visit him at the court. This the hermit says he will do on the morrow, and the king rides home, recalling his men by a blast of his horn. Here the poem breaks off in the manuscript, but there can be no doubt that it went on to relate the hermit's visit to court and reward by the king. In this poem, as in the anecdote of Giraldus Cambrensis, a king loses his way while hunting, takes shelter with a cleric, shares with him a feast and drinking bout of quite unclerical nature, and learns a new drinking challenge. No doubt he also revealed himself to the cleric when he visited court.

The other poem, *King Edward Third and the Shepherd*,[4] tells of the king's meeting by a river-side with a shepherd named Adam. Edward, whom the shepherd does not recognize, offers to get the shepherd payment for the losses which he claims to

[1] *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, ed. Brewer, *Speculum Ecclesiae*, IV, 213-215. Summarized by Child, *The English and Scottish Ballads*, V, 72, f.

[2] MS. Ashmole, 6922, printed in *The British Bibliographer*, IV, 81, Hartshorne's *Ancient Metrical Tales*, p. 293, and W. C. Hazlitt's *Early Popular Poetry*, I, 11. Summarized by Child, V, 72.

[3] In Sherwood forest, l. 15.

[4] Cambridge University Library, Ff. 5. 48b. Printed in Hartshorne's *Ancient Metrical Tales*, p. 35. Summarized by Child, V, 71 f.

have suffered from the king's men, if he will come to court next day and ask for Joly Robyn. To this Adam agrees, and he invites the king home with him to dinner. On the way Adam refuses to take several chances of getting venison. He says he never shoots anything but wild fowl. They have a good dinner and Adam teaches the king a new drinking challenge and reply, "passilodion" and "berafrynd." Edward asks for venison, and when he has assured Adam that he will be secret, the shepherd brings it forth in abundance. After a drinking bout the king returns to court. Next day Adam comes to court and asks for Joly Robyn. The king pays him the money promised, makes him sit down at a banquet, pledges him with "passilodion," and finally informs him that he is the king. The conclusion is wanting, but Adam is probably rewarded. In this poem the king does not lose his way in a hunt, and his host is not a cleric. But it agrees with the Giraldus Cambrensis story and *The King and the Hermit* in that a king unrecognized as such is entertained by a man of lower rank, who feasts him richly in a way that he would not wish revealed, and teaches him a new drinking challenge and reply; afterwards the king entertains him at court and reveals himself by means of the same drinking challenge.[1]

Evidence that the belief that Edward III went about in disguise among his subjects prevailed shortly after his death has been pointed out by Professor Kittredge.[2] The following stanza occurs in Occleve's *De Regimine Principum* (ed. Wright, Roxburghe Club, p. 92):

> "O worthy kyng benigne, Edwarde the laste,
> Thow hadest ofte in thyne harte a drede impressede
> Whiche that thyne humble goste fulle sore agaste,
> And to knowe yf thow cursed were or blessede,
> Amonge the peple ofte hast thow the dressede
> Into the contrey, in symple aray alone,
> To heere what men seide of thy persone."

Of another group of tales in which no drinking challenge occurs, the oldest is *John de Reeve*,[3] a poem of 910 lines in the

[1] Owing to the breaking off of the MS. of *The King and the Hermit* before the hermit's visit, the recognition by means of the drinking challenge is not preserved in it. But there can be little doubt that it existed.

[2] Child, V, 71, foot-note 2.

[3] Percy MS., p. 357, ed. Hales and Furnivall, II, 550.

Percy MS., written probably about 1450.[1] In this poem King Edward I, with a bishop and an earl, is separated from his train while hunting. Being overtaken by darkness, they ask a stout carl who is riding by to give them lodging for the night. He at first refuses, afterwards consents reluctantly, and takes them to a comely hall with fire and candles lighted. The carl, who has already described himself as "John de Reeve," a husbandman and the king's bondman, asks the earl the names of his guests. The earl says that the tallest, Edward, is Piers Pay-for-all, the queen's falconer; the other is a poor chaplain, and he himself is a sumpterman. All sit down to the table and are served with bean-bread, rusty bacon, brewice, lean salt beef a year old, and sour ale. The king asks for better food and drink. John will not give them any better unless they will swear never to tell Edward the king. All three swear to this, and then John brings in spiced bread, wine, venison, and other dainties:

by then came in red wine & ale,
the bores head into the hall,
  then sheild with sauces seere;
Capons both baked & rosted,
woodcockes, venison without bost,
  & dish meeate dight ffull deere.
swannes they had piping hott,
Coneys, curleys, well I wott,
  The crane, the hearne in ffere,
pigeons, partridges, with spicerye,
Elkes, fflomes, with ffroterye
  John bade them make good cheere.[2]

---

[1] It is pointed out by Professor Hales that in lines 10-18 of *John de Reeve*, the author states that the events of the poem befell in the days of King Edward. There were three Edwards, he goes on, but this was Edward Longshanks. Since the author knew but three Edwards, the poem must have been written between 1377 (date of the death of Edward III) and 1461 (date of the accession of Edward IV). The language shows that the Percy text must be nearer the end than the beginnning of this period, and 1450 is a good round date at which to place it.

[2] ll. 458-469. Though far more elaborate, this reminds one of Robin's feast to the king:

Anone before our kynge was set
  The fattë venyson,
The good whyte brede, the good rede wyne,
  And thereto the fyne ale and browne. *Gest*, 393.

Cf. also *Gest*, sts. 32, 33.

After the supper, John with his two neighbours entertains his guests with a rustic dance. King Edward gets a kick on the shins from John's new-clouted shoes, but never had so merry a night. In the morning the king and his attendants ride home to Windsor. At the instance of the queen, the king sends a messenger to summon John to court. John fears treachery on the part of his guest, but arms himself and rides to the palace. He knocks down the porter who refuses him admittance, and rides into the hall, vailing his hat for no one. When he discovers that Piers Pay-for-all was the king he reminds Edward of his promise. Edward knights him and gives him his manor, a hundred pounds, and a tun of wine yearly.

In *The Taill of Rauf Coilȝear*,[1] a humorous metrical romance in the Scottish dialect of the second half of the fifteenth century, Charlemagne is separated from his retinue by a violent storm and loses his way. He meets a carl with two baskets hanging over the back of his horse. The carl gives his name as Rauf Coilȝear. Charlemagne asks him for lodging for the night. Rauf says he will welcome him or any good fellow that is "will of his way." He leads the king to his house and motions him to go in first. The king stands back, whereupon Rauf, calling him uncourteous, takes him by the neck and thrusts him in. When supper is ready he bids the king take his wife by the hand and "begin the buird." Charlemagne hangs back, and Rauf, to teach him a second lesson in courtesy, hits him under the ear and knocks him down; the house, he says, is his own, and his guest should show him courtesy by obeying him.[2] The king then gives in and sits down at the table. A splendid supper is

[1]Printed by Robert Lekpreuik at St. Andrew's in 1572. Reprinted by Laing: *Select Remains of Ancient Popular and Romance Poetry*, 1822, republished ed. by John Small, 1885. Edited by S. J. H. Herrtage, *English Charlemagne Romances*, part VI. (Early English Text Society, Extra Series xxxix); by F. J. Amours, *Scottish Alliterative Poems*, published by the Scottish Text Society, 1892-1897; by Dr. M. Tonndorf, Berlin, 1894; and by Professor William Hand Browne, Baltimore, 1903.

[2]An interesting parallel to this "contention in courtesy,' which has not, I think, been pointed out, is to be found in a traditional adventure of James V of Scotland related by Andrew Small in his *Interesting Roman Antiquities recently discovered in Fife*, Edinburgh, 1823, p. 278 f. James V, it has been already mentioned, is credited by tradition with frequent visits to his subjects in disguise. Once he went into a miller's house at twilight and asked for

served, with capons and conies, venison and wine. Rauf says that the king's foresters have threatened to send him to Paris to be judged by the king for deer-stealing, but he will always have enough venison for himself and his guest. After supper, Rauf asks the king his dwelling, office, and name. The king replies that he is Wymond, a servant of the queen's bedchamber, and lives at the court; he says that if Rauf will come to court he shall have good sale for his fuel. Charlemagne passes the night in a handsome bed in a separate chamber and takes his departure early next morning. He offers to pay the collier's wife for her entertainment, but Rauf will have none of it. Then the king says he will buy a load of his fuel if he comes to court on the morrow. This the collier agrees to do. Charlemagne departs, rejoins his knights, and goes with them to Paris. Next day the collier fills his baskets and rides to the court. On the way he meets Roland, whom Charlemagne has sent out to bring him to court. He refuses to go to the king; he has promised to meet one Wymond. Roland returns without him, and Rauf rides after him to the court. Leaving his horse with the porter, he pushes in to find Wymond. At last he sees him dressed in cloth of gold. Wymond is evidently of higher rank than he called himself, and Rauf would gladly be away. But Charlemagne tells the lords and knights of his adventure, knights the collier, assigns him three hundred pounds a year, and promises him the next vacant fief.

---

quarters. The miller consented to take him in and prepared a supper. When they came to sit down the miller told the stranger to sit at the head of the table. "This the King affected to be shy about doing, as being a stranger, which made the miller add, 'Sit up, for I will have strangers honoured!' The King was accordingly obliged to comply with the request." Next morning the miller accompanied him on his way and came with him to the place where his courtiers were assembled to meet him. The king now took the miller to his palace to partake of his hospitality. When they were about to sit down to dinner, the king commanded the miller to sit at the head of the table. The miller hesitated, whereupon the king gave him a slap on the side of the head and exclaimed, "Sit up, for I will have strangers honoured." The miller stayed eight or ten days about the palace and beat all the courtiers at putting the stone, tossing the bar, and other athletic exercises. (Cf. Adam Bell and his companions at the king's court.) Notwithstanding the fine feeding of the king's table, he pined for his "broken water and slain meal." (Cf. Robin Hood's longing for his former life—a rather distant resemblance, it is true.)

A later story, but of the same type, is told in the poem of *King Henry II and the Miller of Mansfield.*[1] King Henry is hunting in Sherwood, loses his way, and meets a miller who suspects him to be a gentleman-thief, but finally grants him a lodging. At supper he is served with bag-pudding, apple pies, good ale, and venison pasty, which the miller calls "light-foot." The miller's son tells the king that they occasionally make bold with the royal deer, but enjoins him not to tell the king. This King Henry promises, and, after a cup of lamb's wool, all go to bed, the king sleeping with the miller's son. Next morning the nobles find the king at the miller's house. The miller thinks he shall be hanged, but the king dubs him a knight, and rides to Nottingham and thence to Westminster. For a sport, the king sends a messenger to the miller, ordering the new-made knight to visit his court with his wife and son, upon St. George's day. The miller obeys, and all three dress in their best and ride to the court on mill-horses. There is much coarse pleasantry in the boorish remarks of the miller's son in answer to the king. The three guests sit down to dinner; the king wishes for some of their "light-foot," whereat the miller's son rebukes him for eating of it and then telling. After the dinner the miller and his son dance with the court ladies and cause much laughter; finally King Henry makes the miller overseer of Sherwood with a stipend of three hundred pounds a year.

Two late broadsides, *The Royal Frolic, or King William's Entertainment* and *King and Cobbler,* are late forms of the same type of story, and are interesting in that they show its persistence.

A consideration of the stories of this type above summarized warrants the statement that, from the thirteenth century to

[1]Not extant in an edition earlier than the seventeenth century, and probably not earlier, at least in its present form. Editions: *Kinge and Miller,* Percy MS., p. 235, Hales and Furnivall, II, 147. *The Pleasant History of the Miller of Mansfield, in Sherwood, and Henry the Second, King of England,* etc., Wood, 254, iv. Printed for F. Coles, J. Wright, T. Vere, and William Gilbertson, 1655. Reprinted by Child from these two editions, *English and Scottish Ballads,* V, 84-87. Also in the Roxburghe ballads, I, 178, 228, III, 853, the first reprinted by Chappell, *Roxburghe Ballads,* I, 537; Pepys, I, 528, No. 272; Bagford, II, 25; Wood, 401, fol. 5; Crawford, no. 491. All cited by Child, V, 69, foot-note 3.

the seventeenth, stories in which a king unrecognized as such was entertained at a rich banquet by one of his subjects and afterwards received his host at court and rewarded him, were numerous and popular in England. It is, moreover, a significant fact that every important outlaw of English tradition makes his peace with the king and pays a visit to his court. Hereward is well received by King William.[1] Both Eustace and Fulk fitz Warin visit the courts of King John of England and King Philip Augustus of France, and at different times receive peace and favour from both kings.[2] Fulk fitz Warin and his men spend a month at the court of King John. Wallace, of course, would have no peace with the enemy of Scottish independence, Edward I, but he visited the court of Philippe le Bel, king of France.[3] Gamelyn, after killing the sheriff and the justice, went with his brother to the king, received pardon for himself and his men, and was made chief justice of the forest."[4] Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesly were pardoned and received good offices from the king when they visited him.[5] Evidently the visit of the outlaw to the king's court, and his reception of pardon and honours from the king, were standing traits of the English outlaw tradition and sure to have suggested themselves to the singers of the early Robin Hood ballads.

It is practically certain, therefore, that these ballad-singers were familiar with tales or ballads in which a king in disguise was entertained by one of his subjects and afterwards received this subject at his court. They knew also many stories of great outlaws who visited the king's court and received pardon and favour; and they were constantly evolving fresh adventures of one Robin Hood, a good yeoman who embodied their ideal of the outlaw. It would not have been unnatural, therefore, for a ballad-singer who wished to make Robin Hood visit the king's

---

[1] *Gesta Herwardi*, pp. 399, 400.

[2] *Roman d'Eustache*, ll. 1881-1910, 2216-2248. *Fulk fitz Warin*, ed. Wright, p. 114 ff, 171-172; ed. Stevenson, pp. 365-369, 407-408.

[3] *Wallace*, IX, ll. 301-677; X, ll. 907-966; XI, ll. 1-319.

[4] *Gamelyn*, ll. 887-898.

[5] *Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesly* (116), 108 ff, 163 ff.

court, to combine these two stories. He might well have felt such a union to be necessary. For Robin Hood to go boldly to the court and ask for pardon (as do Adam Bell and his companions[1]) would have been inconsistent with his character. All the older ballads represent him as in love with the merry greenwood and with no desire to leave it. Clearly Robin could not go to the king. The king must go to Robin. With the consciousness of this would have come simultaneously the recollection of stories of a king's meeting with and entertainment by a man of lower rank; and the idea would have immediately presented itself of making the king, either by accident (as in most of the extant stories) or by design, meet with Robin in the forest, be feasted and entertained by him, reveal himself, pardon Robin, and invite him to his court, whither Robin and his men would go. Such a ballad might have been known to the compiler of the *Gest* and have been employed by him as the basis of the seventh and eighth fits.

The alternative possibility is that the episode of the king's visit in disguise to Robin Hood and Robin's subsequent visit to the court occurred in no single ballad of Robin Hood, but, from suggestions drawn from such stories as those summarized above, was invented by the compiler of the *Gest*. In support of this possibility it might be urged that neither in the extant single ballads of Robin Hood that are of popular origin nor in any of the English outlaw traditions besides that of Robin Hood is there a story of a king in disguise who visits an outlaw; and that the union of the "king-in-disguise" story with the story of the outlaw's visit to the king's court, in that it is a combination of two stories otherwise found singly, is more likely to have been effected by an artist like the compiler of the *Gest* than by a ballad-singer.

But the two stories have been shown to fit together very easily. There is no reason for denying to the ballad-singer the ingenuity necessary to unite them. The desire, which must early have been felt, of bringing Robin to the king's court has also been pointed out; and it has been indicated that the introduc-

[1] "Clowdysle sayde, We wyll to oure kynge, To get vs a chartre of peace." St. 108.

tion of the king-in-disguise motive was an obvious and ready method of bringing Robin and the king together and thus preparing for Robin's visit to the court. Adding to these considerations the fact that so much of the *Gest* has already been shown to rest on ballads; that the style of the seventh and eighth fits is in the same popular manner as that of the earlier parts of the *Gest*; and that an independent narrative may readily be separated from the seventh and eighth fits, relating a story of a king's visit to an outlaw and an outlaw's return visit: we are justified in the inference that these fits are based upon an earlier ballad. The reasons for this inference will be more clearly brought out in the analysis which follows.

The first ten stanzas of fit VII (354-364) relate how the king came to Nottingham to take Robin Hood and the knight, as he had promised to do in stanza 325. Hearing what had happened, he seized the knight's lands (st. 356). He went all through Lancashire to Plomton Park and found the deer very scarce. Enraged at this, he swore by the Trinity that he wished he might see Robin Hood, and offered the knight's lands as a reward to any one who would bring the knight's head (sts. 357-361). But an old knight advised the king to give the knight's lands to no one whom he wished well; for no man who held them would save his head while Robin Hood bore a bow (sts. 362-364).

These stanzas are in close relation to the preceding fit. They have been prepared for by the sheriff's visit to the king and complaint of the knight and Robin in stanzas 322-324, and by the king's expression of his purpose to come to Nottingham in stanzas 325-326. The king's anger has its motive also in the slaying of the sheriff and release of the knight. Stanzas 357, 358, in which the king notices the scarcity of deer, give a further reason for his anger against Robin Hood, but do not refer to any particular incident in the two first divisions of the *Gest*. With these exceptions, however, stanzas 354-364 form an important link in the narrative and are evidently the work of the compiler. The two stanzas about the deer may also be his, or they may have originally belonged to the narrative which follows. The opening stanzas of this narrative (365, 366) suggest such a connection. They relate how the king dwelt in Notting-

ham for over half a year but could never hear of Robin Hood, who went about and slew the king's deer at his pleasure. This connects itself closely with stanzas 357, 358,[1] but not necessarily with the rest of the ten introductory stanzas. Moreover, the succeeding narrative, as will appear presently, implies a situation different from that of fit VI and the introductory stanzas of fit VII which refer to it.[2]

A forester told the king that if he and five of his knights would put on monk's weed, he would guide them to a part of the forest where they would meet with Robin. The king and his knights were soon arrayed as an abbot and four monks. Followed by the king's sumpter-horses, they rode a mile into the wood. Here they met Robin and his men standing in the way. Robin seized the king's horse and said, "Sir Abbot, we are yeomen who live on the king's deer. You have churches and rents and much gold. Give us some *for sayntë charyte*." The king said that he had but forty pound and were it a hundred he would give it to Robin. Robin took the money, divided half of it among his men, and returned the other half to the supposed abbot (sts. 367-383). The abbot then said that he was the bearer of a greeting and a command from Edward the king: Edward sent his seal and bade Robin come to Nottingham to meat and meal. Robin knelt down when he saw the royal seal, said that he loved no man in the world so well as his king, and

[1] 357. All the passe of Lancasshyre
He went both ferre and nere,
Tyll he came to Plomton Parke;
He faylyd many of his dere.

358. There our kynge was wont to se
Herdës many one,
He coud vnneth fynde one dere,
That bare ony good horne.

365. Half a yere dwelled our comly kynge
In Notyngham, and well more;
Coude he not here of Robyn Hode,
In what countrë that he were.

366. But alwey went good Robyn
By halke and eke by hyll,
And alway slewe the kingës dere,
And welt them at his wyll.

[2] Sts. 354-356, 359-364.

invited the abbot to dine with him. He blew his horn and seven-score wight young men came up. The king said to himself that Robin's men obeyed their master better than his own men (sts. 384-391). At dinner, Robin and Little John served the king with venison, bread, ale, and wine. After the meal the outlaws entertained their guest by an exhibition of archery. The rule of the contest was that whoever missed the mark should lose his arrow and receive a buffet on his bare head. Twice Robin shot and cleft the mark. So did Gilbert with the White Hand. Little John and Scathelocke missed, and Robin smote them full sore. But at Robin's last shot he failed himself. Gilbert told him to stand forth and take his pay. Robin gave his arrow to the abbot and asked him to deliver the blow. The abbot said it was unbecoming to his order to strike a yeoman, but Robin gave him full permission. He rolled up his sleeve and gave Robin such a buffet that he nearly fell to the ground. "There is pith in thine arm," said Robin, "thou art a stalwart friar." He looked into his face and recognized the king. Robin, Sir Richard at the Lee (st. 410^3), and all the outlaws fell on their knees. The king asked for mercy for himself and his men. Robin replied by a similar request for himself and his men. This the king granted on condition that Robin and his men should come to his court and serve him. Robin said that he would come with his men, but added that unless he liked his service he would return to the forest and shoot the deer as he had done before (sts. 392-417).

Here the seventh fit ends, and although the adventure continues in the eighth without a break it seems advisable to turn back here and question the source of the narrative just summarized. It must be noted first of all that this narrative contains few references to the preceding part of the *Gest*. In the fifty-two stanzas (sts. 365-417) there is but one mention of Sir Richard at the Lee (st. 410^3), where the knight is said to have knelt before the king with the outlaws. His pardon by the king is not described until stanzas 431^3-432 in the eighth fit. The line in which the knight is mentioned is isolated from the preceding and following narrative of fit VII, stanzas 365-417.

Moreover, the events and spirit of this whole narrative are not in harmony with the events and spirit of fit VI, in which the story is told of the knight's imprisonment and rescue. At the end of fit VI and in the first ten stanzas of fit VII, Robin Hood has slain the king's officer and released the knight who defied the king's authority (st. 324). The king has come to Nottingham and is bent on punishing both Robin and the knight (sts. 359-361). But in the remaining stanzas of fit VII (365-417) the king shows no anger against Robin Hood and no desire for vengeance upon him. The slaying of the sheriff is not referred to, and the knight is mentioned only once (st. 410^3). The king deliberately puts himself into Robin Hood's power. He certainly would not do this if vengeance were his object. When Robin, taking him for an abbot, demands some of his money, the king gives him all he has—forty pounds—and adds:

> "But yf I had an hondred pounde,
> I wolde vouch it safe on the." (St. 381^{3-4}.)

Such benignity and good humour are not in accordance with the situation at the end of fit VI and with the king's anger as expressed in stanzas 359, 360.

Fit VII, from stanza 365 to the end, tells a story independent, except for the mention of the knight in stanza 410^3, of the preceding narrative of the *Gest*. In these stanzas, outside of this one line, there is no hint that Robin has killed the king's officer or given aid to a rebellious knight. The king of England, a merry monarch and a tall and stalwart man,[1] who evidently loves "a gode felawë" even though he be an outlaw, has lived in Nottingham for half a year.[2] He is eager to see Robin Hood, who is leading a free outlaw life in the neighbouring forest and killing the king's deer at his pleasure (st. 366). All the king's efforts to find him have proved fruitless (st. 365^{3-4}). He therefore adopts the suggestion of a forester and goes out with only five attendants, all six disguised as monks, to meet Robin Hood (sts. 367-374). What is his motive? It cannot be to

[1] Sts. 372, 408, 409.

[2] St. 365.

punish Robin for killing his deer or for any other offence; for the king is putting himself directly into Robin's hands. It can be only a love of adventure and a sincere desire to make the acquaintance of this "prince of thieves," this courteous, brave, and generous outlaw, who has so long maintained his independent forest life. He has been attracted by what he has heard of Robin and wishes to meet him and to win him over to his service. On this assumption it is easy to explain the king's boldness in putting himself into Robin's power, the benignity with which he speaks to him, his good humour and good fellowship with the outlaws, and the readiness with which he pardons them. He has disguised himself and visited Robin with the express purpose of winning him over to his service and bringing him to his court.

On the basis of numerous stories of a king's entertainment by one of his subjects and of the characteristic trait of outlaw traditions that the outlaw visits the king's court and is pardoned, it has already been shown that a ballad-composer might well have invented a ballad of a visit of the king to Robin Hood and Robin's subsequent visit to the king.[1] The narrative of stanzas 365-417 might well be based on the first part of such a ballad. In this assumed ballad there were probably few disagreements with stanzas 365-417, which, no doubt, represent it with fair closeness. One whole stanza[2] is an echo of stanza 292 in fit V,[3] and is possibly the work of the compiler of the *Gest*. But it may have become a commonplace in the Robin Hood ballads before his time and have existed independently in the two ballads from which fits V and VII were probably made. The same thing may be said of other lines in fit VII which re-echo lines in

[1] See above, pp. 113, 114.

[2] 401. Twyse Robyn shot aboute,
And euer he cleued the wande,
And so dyde good Gylberte
With the Whytë Hande.

[3] 292. Thryës Robyn shot about,
And alway he slist the wand,
And so dyde good Gylberte
Wyth the whytë hande.

Cf. 146[1-2].

the earlier part of the *Gest*. Stanza 385^{3-4}, for example, is very much like stanza 29^{3-4}; 386^{1-2} resembles 313^{1-2}; 389 is a variation of 229; 394^{1-2} of 192^{1-2} and 197^{1-2}. Such lines and stanzas may well have occurred in the separate ballads used by the compiler of the *Gest;* and it is impossible to say in any given case whether he was imitating an earlier line in the *Gest* or using a similar one from the ballad on which he based fit VII. So the dinner in which Robin and Little John serve the king with the best of venison, bread, wine, and ale (sts. 392, 393) has a general resemblance to three other meals in the *Gest*—the dinner at which the knight is entertained, stanzas 32, 33; the supper to the sheriff, stanza 191; the dinner to the monk, stanza 231. But the entertainment at dinner by Robin of those whom he captured may have been his habitual custom in many independent ballads, and the descriptions of these dinners may have been very similar in each case. It is probable that some of these resemblances in fit VII to earlier parts of the *Gest* are due to the compiler. It is equally probable that some of them existed in the original ballad which underlies fit VII. They furnish no argument against its derivation from such a ballad.

At the beginning of the eighth fit (which follows the seventh without an interval) the king asks Robin to sell him some of his green cloth (st. 418). The king and his knights put on Lincoln green, cast away their monks' clothes, and ride with the outlaws towards Nottingham. On the way, all shoot at various marks. The king and Robin ride together and continue the game of *pluck-buffet* in which the outlaws had engaged in fit VII. The king gets the worst of the contest and receives many a buffet from Robin (sts. 422-426). When the people of Nottingham see the outlaws coming, the whole company clad in green, they think the king is slain and begin to flee from the town (sts. 427-429). The king reveals himself and the people rejoice (sts. $430\text{-}431^{2}$). He pardons the knight and restores his lands (sts. 431^{3}-432).

Stanzas $418\text{-}431^{2}$, describing the king's disguise as an outlaw and the trick played on the people of Nottingham, form an episode which may have been suggested by some other story, but

could not stand by itself, and is therefore an elaboration of the ballad of Robin Hood and the King just postulated, not a separate ballad. It is very probably the work of the compiler of the *Gest*, but of this one cannot be confident. Brandl believes that it is a conscious variation on the wrapping of the sheriff in a mantle of green when he is Robin's guest (sts. 193, 194). On that occasion Robin says that he will teach the sheriff to be an outlaw (st. 199^{3-4}); and when the king and his knights have put on Lincoln green they ride toward Nottingham, "outlawes as they were" (st. 423^{4}). Brandl uses this as an argument that fit III was *ab origine* a part of fits VII and VII.[1] In this I cannot agree with him. But his statement that the putting on of green by the king is a sort of parallel to the putting on of green by the sheriff is plausible, and, if it could be accepted, would establish what is in any case very probable, that the episode in stanzas 418-431^{2} is the work of the compiler of the *Gest*.

Stanzas 431^{3}-432, in which the king pardons the knight and restores his lands, are evidently the work of the compiler of the *Gest*. They complete the story of the knight which, it has been pointed out, is the bond of union between the three divisions of the poem. This incident of the knight's pardon is very briefly treated:

431^{3}. Than bespake our comly kynge
To Syr Rycharde at the Lee.

432. He gaue hym there his londe agayne,
A good man he bad hym be;
Robyn thanked our comly kynge,
And set hym on his kne.

As Fricke observes (p. 33), the knight is not even permitted to thank the king for his pardon. Robin is made to speak for him. This brevity is best explained by supposing that the stanzas are an insertion by the compiler, made as brief as possible in order to avoid delaying the story of Robin's visit to the king.

Robin dwells in the king's court over a year. To win

[1] See p. 77, note 1, above.

renown he makes so many gifts to knights and squires that at the end of that time he has spent a hundred pounds and all his men's fee (sts. 433, 434). All his men except Little John and Scathelocke have deserted him (st. 435). One day he sees young men shooting and is overcome by longing for his woodland life. He goes to the king and tells him that he has made a vow to go barefoot and woolward to a chapel of Mary Magdalen which he has built in Barnsdale (sts. 436-442). The king grants him leave to be absent for seven nights, and Robin takes his departure (sts. 443, 444). Robin comes to the greenwood on a merry morning. He hears the merry song of the birds and thinks how long it is since he was last there. Then he slays a great hart, and blows his horn. The outlaws in the forest know the sound and quickly come towards him. Robin is again surrounded by sevenscore of wight young men, and for twenty-two years he dwells in the greenwood and will never come again to King Edward (sts. 445-450).

It has been shown that all the famous outlaws of the earlier English tradition paid a visit to the king's court, and that the ballad of Robin's entertainment of the king upon which stanzas 365-417 are probably based would have been likely to conclude with such a visit. Accepting this probability, one would naturally infer that stanzas 433-450, just summarized, which contain an account of Robin's visit to the court, were derived from the conclusion of this ballad. The ballad-singer, having told of the king's visit to Robin, would hardly have omitted to tell of Robin's return visit to the king. But having once brought him to the court it is difficult to think that he left him there. It is true that Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, and William of Cloudesly, when they had obtained the king's pardon and the pope's, "came and dwelled with the kynge, And dyed good men all thre" (*Adam Bell,* no. 117, st. 169^{3-4}). But one cannot believe that Robin Hood was ever thought of by the folk as abandoning permanently his greenwood life. Besides, the ballad of *Robin Hood's Death* (120) must have been among the earliest, and in this he remains an outlaw to the end. It is probable, then, that the ballad of the king's visit to Robin Hood upon

which stanzas 365-417 of fit VII are based went on to relate how Robin came to the king's court and won fame for his liberality (and possibly for his wonderful archery); and how at the end of a year Robin grew weary of court life and under pretext of a vow got leave from the king to return to the greenwood. Upon this concluding portion of the ballad stanzas 433-450 might well have been based. There may have been and doubtless was considerable elaboration on the part of the compiler of the *Gest*. The beautiful description of Robin's arrival in the wood (sts. 445-447) may be his. But in essentials the narrative was probably the same as in the ballad of Robin's visit to the king.

The alternative supposition is that the ballad upon which fit VII, stanzas 365-417, is based ended with Robin permanently established in the king's service; and that the compiler invented the narrative of his return to the wood in stanzas 433-450 in order to close his poem in conformity with the current idea that Robin was an outlaw all his life, and with the ballad of *Robin Hood's Death* (120), a brief summary of which he intended to make at the end (sts. 451-456).

Between these alternatives it is really impossible to decide. One would like to think, however, that Robin's longing for the greenwood and return thither occurred in the ballad. It does not seem as though any composer of the earlier ballads could have left him contented in the king's court; and since the question cannot be definitely decided, we may follow our inclinations and assign the kernel of stanzas 433-450 to the ending of the ballad on which stanzas 365-417 were based.

A review of the third division of the *Gest* shows that stanzas 354-364 are in all probability the work of the compiler. They furnish a transition from fit VI to the main story of fit VII. But stanzas 357 and 358 may have been taken from the beginning of the ballad from which fit VII, stanza 365 ff, is drawn. This ballad—represented in a general way by stanzas 365-417, 433-450—related how the king came to Nottingham, and finding his deer greatly diminished by Robin Hood and his men, attempted to capture him but failed; and then, admiring his boldness and courage, determined to visit him in disguise and win him over to

his service; how he and his five knights dressed as monks rode into the forest, were stopped by Robin, and entertained with dinner and a shooting match; how Robin recognized the king, begged pardon for himself and his men, and received it on condition that he and his men should come and serve the king (365-417); how Robin won fame at the king's court by his liberality (perhaps also by his archery, though nothing is said of this in the *Gest*); how at the end of a year he wearied of court life and returned to the merry greenwood (sts. 433-450). This ballad seems to have belonged to the Sherwood cycle. The king's meeting with Robin Hood occurs not far from Nottingham (fit VII, st. 369 and *passim*) and must therefore have been originally placed in Sherwood forest. Stanzas 440 and 442, in which Robin asks leave of the king to visit his chapel in Barnsdale, must therefore have been revised or completely written by the compiler of the *Gest*.

Stanza 410^3, "So dyde Syr Rycharde at the Le," was certainly added by the compiler of the *Gest*. The episode of the king's disguise as an outlaw (sts. $418\text{-}431^2$) and the king's pardon of Sir Richard (sts. $431^3\text{-}432$) are with little doubt his work. The scene of Robin's return to the greenwood (sts. 445-449) probably had its counterpart in the ballad, but may have been elaborated by the compiler of the *Gest*.

Stanzas 451-456—rightly called by Child a mere epilogue—tell very briefly that Robin Hood was betrayed and slain by his kinswoman, the prioress of Kyrkesly, and her lover, Sir Roger of Doncaster. The compiler of the *Gest* evidently had in mind a ballad on this subject; for stanza 454,

> Than bespake good Robyn,
> In place where as he stode,
> 'To morow I muste to Kyrkesly,
> Craftely to be leten blode,'

is very similar to the opening stanza of *Robin Hood's Death* (120):

> 'I will neuer eate nor drinke,' Robin Hood said,
> 'Nor meate will doo me noe good,
> Till I haue beene att merry Churchlees,
> My vaines for to let blood.'

The prioress's treachery and plot to slay Robin occur both in the final stanzas of the *Gest* and in *Robin Hood's Death*. The ballad known to the compiler was no doubt an earlier version of *Robin Hood's Death*. In his brief statement of the fact—one cannot call it a summary of the narrative—of the death of Robin Hood, the compiler of the *Gest* furnishes the information, not found in the Percy MS. version of *Robin Hood's Death* (120A), that Red Roger's real name was Sir Roger of Doncaster, and that he was the lover of the prioress. This makes it clear that the ballad he knew was not exactly the same as the ballad in the Percy MS. It is unfortunate that he did not see fit to summarize it at greater length or to incorporate it into the *Gest* as a new fit. The gaps in the corresponding ballad in the Percy MS. would not then be so puzzling.

The compiler of the *Gest* had succeeded admirably in weaving together a number of ballads of Robin Hood, a knight and a monk, Robin Hood and the sheriff, and Robin Hood and the king. The connections between these stories had been well arranged and the narrative had proceeded without a break. He was either unable or unwilling to manage the transition to a complete story of Robin Hood's death. But his poem, as the opening stanzas prove, was planned to give a complete and representative picture of the life and character of Robin Hood. It was clearly necessary to say something about his death. The brief account in stanzas 451-456 was therefore added as a general conclusion.

CONCLUSION.

The results of the foregoing study of the *Gest of Robin Hood* may now be briefly recapitulated. A careful analysis of its structure and narrative has enabled us to determine with a reasonable degree of probability and exactness the outlines of the ballads from which it was constructed and the portions of the narrative which are to be assigned entirely to the compiler. These conclusions are summarily indicated in the following table:

Gest, Division I.	*Subject.*	*Probable Source.*	*Extant Analogues.*
Fit I, stanzas 1-16	General account of Robin's character and habits.	Compiler.	
17-44[2]	A poor knight entertained by Robin, found honest, and not robbed.	A ballad of Robin Hood relieving a poor knight.	*Roman d'Eustache,* ll. 928-951.
44[3]-61	The knight says he owes £400 to Abbot of St. Mary's.	Compiler.	
62-68, 79	Robin lends the knight £400 on the security of Our Lady.	Compiler, at suggestion of a well known miracle of the Virgin.	Many Latin versions. Adgar, *Marienlegenden,* no. 29. English legends of Mary in the Vernon MS., no. VI.
69,-78, 80, 81	At request of his men Robin makes the knight some presents.	Compiler.	
Fit II, sts. 82-85	The knight sets out for St. Mary's Abbey.	Compiler.	
86-125	He pays his debt to the abbot.	A ballad in which a man unexpectedly claims his inheritance. (Sts. 86, 87, 91-94, 106[3,4], 117-118, 123, additions of compiler, who must have treated this ballad freely.)	*The Heir of Linne* (267).
126-134	The knight goes home, collects money and sets out to repay Robin on the appointed day.	Compiler.	
135-142	The knight is delayed by helping a yeoman.	A ballad or tale of a yeoman who was successful in wrestling.	*Gamelyn,* ll. 183-284.
143	Transition. Robin Hood waits for the knight.	Compiler.	

Gest, Division I.		*Subject.*	*Probable Source.*	*Extant Analogues*
Fit IV, sts.	205-207	Robin Hood waits for the knight.	Compiler.	
	208-213 215-232[2] 243-248[2] 255-260	The high cellarer of St. Mary's is captured, questioned, found untruthful, and robbed.	A ballad of Robin Hood's robbery of two monks who lied about their money.	*Roman d'Eustoche, ll.* 1744-1775. *Robin Hood's Golden Prize* (147).
	214, 232[3]-242 248[3]-254	The cellarer of St. Mary's is said by Robin Hood to be Our Lady's messenger for the return of his loan. When the knight arrives, therefore, Robin will take no money from him.	An exemplum in which money lent on the security of God is replaced by robbing a monk. (Sts. 253-254, 266-269, however, are the invention of the compiler.)	Jacques de Vitry, *Exempla in Sermones Vulgares,* LXIX (and many other forms).
	261-275			
	276-280	Robin makes the knight a present.	Compiler.	
Gest, Division II.				
Fit III, sts.	144	Introductory.	Compiler.	
	145-150 153-163[2] 174-180	Little John takes service with the sheriff, fights his servants, and carries off his money and plate.	A ballad in which Robin or one of his men took service with the sheriff and robbed him.	*Gesta Herwardi,* pp. 384-388. *Fulk fitz Warin,* ed. Wright, pp. 92-95.
	150-153	How Little John was released from the knight's service.	Compiler.	
	163[3]-173	Little John fights with the sheriff's cook.	A ballad in which Robin Hood met his match.	*Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar* (123), *The Jolly Pindar of Wakefield* 124). And many other ballads.
	181-204	Little John entices the sheriff into Robin's power.	A ballad in which Robin or one of his men enticed the sheriff into Robin's power.	*Robin Hood and the Potter* (121). *Robin Hood and the Butcher,* (122). *Roman d'Eustoche,* ll. 775-851. *Fulk fitz Warin,* pp. 146-148.

Gest, Division II.		*Subject.*	*Probable Source.*	*Extant Analogues.*
Fit V, sts.	281	Transition.	Compiler.	
	282-308	Robin and his men take part in a shooting contest, are attacked by the sheriff, and escape.	A ballad in which Robin and his men were attacked and escaped. (Sts. 287, 296[8]-298 by compiler.)	*Fulk fitz Warin*, p. 153. *Wallace*, XI, 507-522.
	309-316	The knight receives Robin into his castle.	Compiler.	
Fit VI, sts.	317-328	The sheriff, failing to get admission, reports the knight and Robin Hood to the king, who says he will capture them.	Compiler.	
	329-353	The sheriff captures the knight. Robin rescues him.	Ballad of Robin's rescue of a knight. Ballad of Robin's revenge on the sheriff.	*Gesta Herwardi*, p. 372. *Robin Hood Rescuing Three Squires* (140). *Robin Hood and the Butcher* (122) A, 1-3.
Gest, Division III.				
Fit VII, sts.	354-364	The king comes to Nottingham, but cannot capture Robin Hood.	Compiler.	
Fit VIII, sts.	365-417 433-450	Disguised as an abbot, the king allows himself to be captured by Robin Hood, but afterwards reveals himself, pardons Robin, and takes him to his court, whence after a year Robin retires to Barnsdale.	A ballad of Robin's entertainment of the king and visit to his court. (Amplified by compiler of *Gest.* 418-432 his work).	*Gesta Herwardi*, pp. 399-400. *Adam Bell* (116), sts. 108 ff, 163 ff. *John de Reeve* and similar tales.
Epilogue, sts.	451-456	Robin treacherously killed.	Some form of the ballad of *Robin Hood's Death* (120).	

In addition to this indication of the passages assignable to ballad sources and to the compiler, our investigation has also shown that the compiler of the *Gest*, besides an intimate knowledge of the Robin Hood ballads and a complete sympathy with them, was possessed of admirable artistic skill. His poem is not a mere mechanical stringing together of ballads, but a complete rehandling and fusion of ballads, and mediaeval tales as well, into a unified narrative. Some of the ballads he used may have been composed from shorter ballads by others before him, but their present effective combination is with little doubt his alone. As to the personality of this compiler, his date and position in life, no definite information has been obtained in this study. He seems to the writer to have lived not in the fifteenth but in the fourteenth century, when the final *e*, of which so many cases occur in his poem,[1] was still in use, when the Robin Hood ballads, then widespread, must have been in their finest popular form, and when the democratic spirit of the lower classes would have been particularly stimulating to a compiler of ballads of Robin Hood, the friend of the poor, the enemy of greedy lords and churchmen.[2] Notwithstanding his thorough sympathy with the unlettered ballad muse, he must have been a man of some literary training: so carefully planned and constructed a poem cannot have been the product of a mere untutored ballad-singer. Perhaps he was a cleric in minor orders, perhaps a clerk turned minstrel of a superior kind. Whatever his identity, the humble rhapsode who compiled the *Gest of Robin Hood* has been to successive generations a source of wholesome pleasure and deserves to be ranked, though on a lower plane, with the author of "Gawain and the Green Knight" and the "Pearl," as one of the unknown masters of mediaeval English literature.

Concerning the bearing of the above results upon the question of the origin of epic, little can be said—partly owing to lack of space, and partly because the writer prefers to submit his conclusions to criticism before venturing to use them for the strengthening of any theories. Thus much, however, may be ventured: If the method of composition here attributed to the *Gest* be accepted as the *most probable*—and no more is claimed

[1] See above, p. 4, note 3.

[2] Cf. Brandl, Paul's *Grundriss*, vol. II, part 1, p. 844.

for the results of this study—then the theory that popular epics like the *Iliad,* the *Beowulf,* and the *Roland* are a development by means of accretion and artistic rehandling from popular ballads, receives important confirmation from the *Gest of Robin Hood.* Here is a poem in ballad metre and style, demonstrably founded on ballads of a cycle still partly preserved, a poem the outlines of whose constituent ballads may with great probability be made out; and at the same time a poem making a certain approach to epic breadth in its treatment of the adventures of a central figure, a poem of some descriptive detail and of a very careful and effective narrative construction, in which events a long distance ahead are foreseen and prepared for. In this remarkable combination of ballad and epic qualities the *Gest* is certainly a link between the two literary forms; under more favourable conditions, and with a more broadly national hero, it might have developed into an English *Iliad* or *Roland;* as it stands, it shows what the *Iliad* or *Roland* might have been had they dealt with a lower plane of society and been arrested in development. As the clearest and most important example yet pointed out of such a link between ballad and epic,[1] the *Gest of Robin Hood* is, therefore, of decided significance; and if this study has made that significance clearer, its main purpose has been attained.

[1]The ballad of *Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough and Wyllyam of Cloudesly* (116), is closely associated with the Robin Hood ballads in subject, and is, like the *Gest,* divided into fits. It is much shorter, however (170 stanzas and three fits, as against 456 stanzas and eight fits); it combines only two separate stories (the capture and rescue of William really form only one story; the visit to the king's court is a separate adventure), and the shooting episode is very poorly worked into the ballad. On the other hand, *Adam Bell* shows in the first two fits a motivation more skilful than that of the *Gest* (Cf. Hart, *Ballad and Epic,* pp. 80, 81, and see the whole section, pp. 77 ff).

Heusler, *Lied und Epos,* pp. 41-46, compares the *Gest of Robin Hood* with version A of the Danish ballad of *Marsk Stig* (Grundtvig, *Danmarks Gamle Folkeviser,* III, 338), which has been shown beyond question to have been made up with some original additions from three independent ballads, printed by Grundtvig as versions CDE, FG, and HI, respectively. (Jörgensen, *Bidrag til Nordens Historie i Middelalderen,* Copenhagen, 1871, pp. 113-134; Martensen, *Historiske Tidskrift,* 4. Raekke, 4, pp. 123-158, Copenhagen, 1873-4; Olrik, *Danske Folkeviser i Udvalg,* Copenhagen, 1899). This poem surpasses the *Gest* as an example of the union of simple ballads to form a longer narrative poem; for its constituent ballads have been preserved. But it is only about one-fourth as long as the *Gest,* presents a far less complete and epic picture of its hero, and is decidedly close to the simple ballad in narrative method.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO STUDIES

PHILOLOGICAL SERIES

No. 1. The Anglo-Saxon Scop, by L. F. ANDERSON $0.50

Extra volume : Golding's A Tragedie of Abrahams Sacrifice, edited with an introduction, notes and an appendix containing the Abraham Sacrifiant of Theodore Beza, by M. W. WALLACE 2.50

Extra volume : The Gest of Robin Hood, by W. H. CLAWSON 1.00

Extra volume : Calderon's La Vida es Sueño, edited by M. A. BUCHANAN (*in the press*).

Cornell University Library
PR 2129.C61
The gest of Robin Hood,
3 1924 013 116 664 olin, ove1

LIBRARY ANNEX
2

DATE DUE

MAY	F		
GAYLORD			PRINTED IN U.S.A.